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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-236
Friday
8 December 1995

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Comments on Meeting With Dennis Ross

JN0712133995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza; from "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Yasir 'Arafat met with Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator for the Middle East peace process, at the Presidency in Gaza this afternoon.

Following the meeting, President 'Arafat said several important issues were discussed, including the implementation of what was agreed upon between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. President 'Arafat said a number of issues were raised in general to ensure an accurate and honest implementation of what was agreed upon. The president said he discussed with Ross the meeting of the donor nations, which was scheduled for 9 December but postponed to 1 January. The president and Ross underlined the importance of this meeting to implement what was agreed upon with the donor nations to support Palestinian economy.

On his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres tomorrow, President 'Arafat said he will discuss many issues with Peres.

The U.S. Middle East peace process coordinator said his talks with President 'Arafat were valuable. He said the redeployment in the rest of the West Bank is proceeding according to schedule. Ross added that he heard President 'Arafat's view and assessed with him the peace process and ways to move forward. Ross pointed out that contacts and consultations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides over the past period were good.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, who attended the talks, said the atmosphere in Israel and the United States, and on Capitol Hill, is more positive toward supporting the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. Dr. Sha'th added that the United States wants to see continued progress in the peace process. He said that during the meeting, 'Arafat and Ross spoke about the Palestinian-Israeli-U.S. meetings which were devoted to the establishment of industrial zones in the National Authority areas. Dr. Sha'th said the United States reaffirmed that it will use its good offices to have the donor nations fulfill their obligations in full during an economic conference that will be held in Paris on 9 January. The donor nations have pledged $550 million in aid to the Palestinian people. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Endorses Legislative Election Law

JN0812092195 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat endorsed the legislative election law in its final form last night following daily deliberations and discussions with all our Palestinian people's political, social, economic, and legal sectors.

Al-Za'nun on Election Agreement With Israel

JN0712193095 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 7-8 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Salim al-Za'nun, acting Palestine National Council speaker, told AL-ASWAQ that the Palestinian and Israeli sides agreed to give 60 percent of the 72,000 Palestinians, who live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip illegally or without a national number, the right to participate in the elections.

In this regard, the two sides agreed on two points: The first is that anyone, who has lived in these territories for three years and is now 40 years old, can participate in the elections. The second point is that anyone, who has lived in these territories for 4 years and is now 30 years old, can also take part in the elections. [passage omitted]

'Less Than Half' of Jerusalem Voters Registered

NC0612215895 Paris AFP in English 1444 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Al-Birah, West Bank, Dec 6 (AFP)—Less than half of the eligible Palestinians in east Jerusalem have registered to vote for historic self-rule elections next month, a senior official said Wednesday [6 December].

Faysal al-Husayni, the Palestinian "minister" overseeing Jerusalem issues, said that only 39,000 out of 80,000 elegible voters had registered for the elections on January 20.

"We expected that the level would be much higher but the false rumours spread by the holders of Israeli passports among the city's residents appears to have had an effect," said al-Husayni, the director of Orient House, the PLO's unofficial headquarters in Jerusalem.

He said Palestinians living in east Jerusalem had been told they may lose the right to work in Israel along with unemployment and health benefits if they registered to vote.

Palestinians holding Israeli nationality, who are ineligible to vote and have been condemned by the PLO, are concerned they may be more easily identified if there was a large registration.

The head of the Palestinian Election Commission, Sa'ib 'Urayqat, said Sunday that more than 70,000 Palestinians in east Jerusalem had registered to vote. But he included the Palestinian areas just outside the city's boundaries, which Israel considers to be part of the West Bank.

The voter registration campaign ended Saturday, but Palestinians still have another week to sign their names to the electoral list. [passage omitted]

Nazzal: Hamas Has 'Abandoned' Forming Party

MM0512150295 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by 'Ali al-Salih: "Hamas Abandons Idea of Forming Political Party"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — Muhammad Nazzal, Hamas representative in Jordan, has said that his movement "has resolved that it will not become a political party, and has also abandoned the idea of forming a party to speak on its behalf."

Nazzal confirmed that his movement will not participate in the elections scheduled for 20 January to elect the self-rule authority's legislative assembly of 82 members, and also to elect the Palestinian Authority [PA] president.

Nazzal accused the PA of delaying holding the dialogue with Hamas in order "to gain time until the elections, after which it will deal differently with Hamas." He added that "the PA could resort to oppression...arresting the movement's members and tightening the noose on them."

In a telephone statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Nazzal denied any relations between his movement and the new Islamic party, the announcement of which was postponed in Gaza at the end of last month. Some 100 Islamic figures, some of them affiliated to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, formed a party which they called "the Islamic National Salvation Front," but postponed announcing its formation for reasons they did not disclose. The party's political bureau said in a statement that "the announcement of the party's formation was postponed for technical reasons."

A senior Hamas official in Gaza said at the time that "the postponement was due to internal reasons and has nothing to do with either the PA or the arrest of Shaykh Ahmad Nimr, a Hamas leader in Gaza."

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, a source close to those who worked on the party's formation and who asked to remain anonymous, confirmed that this is indeed the case. The source said that "there are diverging views within the party on some issues such as whether the party should expand to the occupied West Bank and not limit itself to Gaza, and also the issue of participation in the self-rule elections." The source, who asked to remain anonymous, added that "the fact that this issue was not resolved and no united position adopted led to the postponement of the party's announcement."

Nazzal said that Hamas gives its blessing to the formation of any Islamic party which works to confront the occupation and allows its members freedom of choice. However, according to him, it is not possible to combine membership of Hamas with membership of another party.

He added: "The Islamic National Salvation Front has not announced its position yet with regard to the elections and whether it will participate in them or not." He reaffirmed Hamas' position rejecting participation in the elections and said: "Hamas' position is clear, namely to boycott these elections and to urge all sides to boycott them."

With regard to the dialogue with the PA, Nazzal said: "The PA is not serious about the dialogue — this was proved by the fact that the scheduled meeting has been postponed — and is creating a crisis, with the arrest of Shaykh Ahmad Nimr and the fact that Shaykh Abu-Musamih is in jail. This could throw matters back to what they were before the recent detente."

The PA and Hamas were supposed to hold a dialogue in Khartoum following the invitation addressed to both sides by Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front in Sudan. This dialogue, expected to be held last October, did not take place and both sides accused each other of procrastinating, stalling, and setting preconditions.

Some Palestinian sources said that the PA objected, without publicly admitting it, to holding a dialogue in Khartoum so as not to be embarrassed in front of the Egyptian Government, especially after Cairo accused Khartoum of being responsible for the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa last summer.

The PA proposed holding the dialogue in Cairo and said that Egypt had issued an invitation to hold the dialogue there, but Hamas denied it and said that it did not receive such an invitation.

Nazzal reaffirmed that "Hamas did not receive an invitation for dialogue in Cairo," and added: "We did not specify a venue but said that if the PA refused to hold it in Khartoum, we were prepared to agree on some other place. We did not specify Yemen or elsewhere."

The Hamas representative said that the movement always stresses that it is keen to hold a dialogue with the PA and cannot say any more and will not be in the position of appearing too eager, because the dialogue is a necessity for Hamas as much as it is for the PA.

With regard to the position of 'Imad al-Faluji, a Hamas member who traveled with the PA delegation in 'Arafat's plane to attend the recent Amman economic summit at the end of last October, Nazzal said: "Al-Faluji was a Hamas member prior to the Amman economic summit, however, his failure to adhere to the movement's policy has cast doubts on his membership." Nazzal added that al-Faluji does not represent Hamas and is not entitled to speak on its behalf.

Hamas Spokesman Calls For Election Boycott

MM0712121195 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Ghassan al-Tahir: "Hamas Representative in Tehran Tells AL-HAYAH: We Will Not Participate in the Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — Usamah Abu-Hamdan, representative of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in Iran, has stressed that his movement will not participate at all in the legislative elections scheduled to be held in the self-rule areas. He said that "the noise made to promote these elections is intended to give the world the impression that the Palestinian issue has been resolved and the problem is now limited to the election of a legislative council."

Abu-Hamdan told AL-HAYAH that "these elections are to be held under the Oslo and Taba agreements and the supervision of the occupation, which will control the elections' course and results and run them the way it wants. The council to be elected will be a weak product of weak agreements and will have no real powers. Because Israel is entitled under the Oslo agreement to revoke any decision issued by that council if it is incompatible with the Israeli view."

Hamas' representative in Tehran added that "the other danger in these elections is that they limit the Palestinian people to those who are in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, ignoring more than four million Palestinians living in the diaspora." He pointed out that "this inspires the belief that what is happening is a preparation for eliminating the issue of the refugees and their right to return to their homes, on the grounds that those who do not participate in the elections are not Palestinian according to the Israeli classification."

He added that the third negative aspect prompting nonparticipation in the elections is "the voting method in Jerusalem, as it will be conducted in post offices or by proving that the voters and candidates live outside Jerusalem in order to indicate that they are voting as foreigners on foreign territory, exactly as happens with foreign nationals when they vote at their embassies abroad."

He said that this "in practice perpetuates the annexation of Jerusalem to Israel. It is an open recognition by the (Palestinian) Authority that Jerusalem is part of the State of Israel and not an occupied land. This also is a prelude to the expulsion of the Palestinians living in Jerusalem, on the grounds that they have been treated and have agreed to be treated as foreigners, hence they have to return to the addresses that they submitted to cast their votes."

Abu-Hamdan stressed that "Hamas will not participate in these elections, because it refuses to bear false witness."

He urged "the various Palestinian organizations, wherever they are and whatever their political color, to boycott and thwart these elections."

Popular Front Election Boycott Decision Said 'Binding'

MM0812104795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi: "Popular Front Central Committee Compels Cadres To Boycott Palestinian Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — Palestinian sources in Damascus have told AL-HAYAH that meetings of the Central Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] led by George Habash, ended the day before yesterday by "compelling" the PFLP cadres to boycott the elections to be held early next year. The sources added that the consultations, which lasted three days and were chaired in turn by Habash and his deputy Abu-'Ali Mustafa, "have revealed the existence of strong tendencies demanding to participate in the elections, to deal with the institutions, and to oppose the Oslo agreement from within [the territories]," arguing that "the Palestinian situation in the territories differs from that abroad and that what happened after Oslo is a reality which cannot be ignored."

The sources pointed out that the three tendencies which emerged during the negotiations revolved around how to deal with the outcome of the Oslo agreement. This tendency represents the PFLP leaders and cadres who returned to Gaza after the Oslo agreement was concluded and as part of the institutions' lists [of members]. Political Bureau and Central Committee members, including Talal Ahmad and Hani Habib and Abu-Nidal al-Muslimi, gained entry simply upon approval by the [Palestinian] Authority and Israel and were working in the self-rule institutions and ministries. Talal Ahmad is among a five-man delegation who came from Gaza to Damascus to attend the meetings.

The sources added that the cadres from the territories were the proponents of "the hardest line, because they were there before the Oslo developments, unlike those who returned and regularized their situation in the wake of the agreement." The sources added that the leadership abroad "is adamant on boycotting the elections and dealing with the agreement, but is aware of the pressures and the fact that the Palestinian cause has entered a new phase which cannot be ignored. Some of them also raised the issue of participation in any form, such as registering with the People's Party (formerly the Communist Party)."

Dr. Mahir Tahir, PFLP spokesman, told AL-HAYAH that those attending the meeting "discussed most Palestinian issues, developments in the occupied territories, and the elections" without specifying how many of them came from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to attend the sessions, and without mentioning the tendencies and ideas discussed "in view of the fact that these are secret matters which cannot be discussed in the media." He also stressed that the PFLP "is democratic and all views are taken into consideration."

Tahir said that the decision was taken "to boycott the elections for the Oslo council because the elections have specific objectives, namely to confer legitimacy on the agreement," pointing out that the refusal to participate does not mean not believing in "the principle of democracy and elections." He added that the PFLP's position "is a response to all those who think that we would participate in them, tarnishing our position. We all agree on the boycott and, according to the statutes, the decision is binding."

New Party To Operate in Gaza Strip, West Bank

*TA0512171995 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic
5 Dec 95 p 1*

[Report by Muhsin al-Ifranji]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Fikri 'Abd-al-Latif, media spokesman of the Islamic National Salvation Party, affirmed that the establishment of the party will be officially announced at a news conference in Jerusalem before the Palestinian elections on 20 January. He explained that the party has not yet decided whether to participate in the elections. This issue is being studied seriously and in detail.

'Abd-al-Latif said that the proclamation of the party, whose establishment was recently approved by President 'Arafat, has been delayed in order to conduct further consultations with Islamic leaderships and tendencies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to expand the party's constituent council.

He added that these consultations are still going on and that the final formula of the party and its policy will be drawn up in light of the final agreements that are expected to be signed with various Islamic tendencies.

'Abd-al-Latif said that the final makeup of the party will witness changes because of the merger of the two constituent councils from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, whereby a unified West Bank and Gaza Strip political bureau will be announced.

'Abd-al-Latif pointed out that the expansion of the constituent council aims at representing as many residents as possible, gaining more power and popular support, and bringing the views of Islamic groups fundamentally closer.

Acting Speaker on Conditions for PNC Convocation

*TA0512163495 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic
4 Dec 95 p 16*

[Interview with PNC Acting Speaker Salim al-Za'nun by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-MANAR] When will the speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC] be chosen? Or will you continue to keep your current position?

[Al-Za'nun] According to regulations, a speaker and two deputy speakers will be elected at the first PNC session attended by a majority of its members. In addition, a new PLO Executive Committee will be chosen. According to the National Covenant and the constitution, this session will be convened in Jerusalem since it is the permanent headquarters of the PNC. If we are not permitted to convene the PNC in Jerusalem, however, then it will not be convened in Ramallah or Gaza but in one of the Arab capitals as we used to do in the past.

[AL-MANAR] In your recent meeting in Ramallah, did you discuss Israel's demand to amend or annul some articles of the National Covenant?

[Al-Za'nun] These demands were not topics we discussed. What I can say in this context, however, is that unless the PNC members who reside abroad can return to their homeland as citizens with the right of permanent residency and citizenship, and as long as all Palestinian prisoners are not released so that they may participate in the political life and elect a legislative council that would complement our PNC, discussing what Israel is demanding will not only be difficult but impossible. If, however, this were to occur, then there would be no objection to looking into all the issues raised by others.

[AL-MANAR] But the political agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians obligates the latter to amend and annul some articles of the Palestine National Covenant two months after the legislative elections?

[Al-Za'nun] We are not evading our commitments, but those who adopted the concept that dates are not sacred and delayed the implementation of the interim stage by 18 months, should search with us for an alternative that would compensate for the time lost in the interim stage. [passage omitted]

'Abd-Rabbuh: PNC To Be Amended When State 'Imminent'

TA0812074195 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 10

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Bethlehem, QUDS PRESS — A prominent Palestinian official stressed yesterday that the PLO will not agree to introduce any modifications to the Palestine National Covenant [PNC] "unless a Palestinian state is imminent." Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of information and culture in the Palestinian Authority [PA], said that "the PNC articles will only be amended when a Palestinian state becomes imminent."

Shim'on Peres, Israeli prime minister and defense minister, had said that the extension of the self-rule areas will not continue unless PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat annuls the PNC articles calling for the destruction of the Hebrew state. [passage omitted]

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, 'Abd-Rabbuh denied that 'Arafat had promised any of the leaders of political parties and factions that he would appoint them ministers in the PA by virtue of his authority to appoint 20 percent of the ministers. It is worth noting that 80 percent of the PA ministers will be chosen by the Palestinian council whose members will be elected in January. [passage omitted]

Hamas Willing To Coordinate Activities With PA

TA0712190195 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Video report by Yoram Binur]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] has stated that it is willing to stop terror activities against Israel, should this activity harm the interests of the Palestinian Authority [PA]. This comes out in a document senior Hamas members in Gaza presented to Yasir 'Arafat. Our correspondent Yoram Binur reports:

[Begin Binur recording] [passage omitted] In a document that was revealed today for the first time, Hamas is offering to coordinate with the PA concerning its activities against Israel. In addition, Hamas unequivocally declares that it will not act in contravention of agreements already signed between the PA and Israel.

Yasir 'Arafat is trying to quickly reach an agreement with Hamas, before the elections in the territories. Hamas demands that it be made a full partner in the Palestinian government, while 'Arafat demands that Hamas, as a religious organization, be absolutely subject to his authority. In any event, the document that was revealed today, shows that progress has been made in the PA-Hamas negotiations. [end recording]

Islamic Jihad Leader Discusses Role, Israel

NC0612111495 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 26 Nov 95 pp 1, 16

[Interview with Dr. Ramadan 'Abdallah, new secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement of "Palestine," by Jamileh Kadivar on 22 November "after his meeting with a Sudanese delegation"; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Kadivar] My first question is one that may have arisen in the minds of each and every person who is acquainted with the Palestinian problem. How were you elected secretary general of the Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine especially since there were other more experienced and well-known figures in the movement than you?

['Abdallah] As you know, the Islamic Jihad is a military-political organization, and its internal matters and mode of behavior are confidential. I cannot give you any details. I can only say that there were contacts between the central council and the local councils of the movement on this issue and that it was through these councils that the leadership issue was discussed. The main objective was to make the enemy understand that assassinating Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi has not stopped the movement. This is why the central council met immediately after being informed about the martyrdom of Dr. al-Shaqaqi and selected his successor.

[Kadivar] Undoubtedly the martyr Dr. al-Shaqaqi is considered one of the outstanding figures in the Palestinian people's struggles. What impact did his martyrdom have on the occupied territories? Can you make a precise assessment of the Palestinian people's reaction to his martyrdom?

['Abdallah] Dr. al-Shaqaqi was a great Palestinian leader. The Palestinian nation knew him, it trusted him, and believed in him. His name was linked with the Islamic Jihad and Resistance. Although his martyrdom was a blow to the Palestinian jihad movements, this does not mean that the Islamic Jihad and Palestinian Resistance are dependent on individuals — be it Dr. al-Shaqaqi or anyone else. The process that Dr. al-Shaqaqi was linked to is alive and dynamic and will continue its course. Dr. al-Shaqaqi's martyrdom will mark the beginning of new anti-Israeli activities and will intensify the Intifadah, as you saw happening in the days immediately after his martyrdom.

[Kadivar] Will you make any specific changes in the Islamic Jihad's policy and tactics after Dr. al-Shaqaqi's martyrdom? In other words, will the Islamic Jihad's policies and tactics be different from what they were during the days of Dr. al-Shaqaqi?

['Abdallah] Actually, the impact of Dr. al-Shaqaqi's martyrdom will further deepen the Islamic Jihad's strategy and not change it. The Islamic Jihad's strategy is not something that will change with the martyrdom of its leader.

Our strategy is stable in all fields. Various tactical issues may be chosen at specific times and under specific political situations and may have to change. Had Dr. al-Shaqaqi continued his leadership, he, too, would have made some changes in tactics if the need had arisen.

[Kadivar] Throughout the period when Dr. al-Shaqaqi was in charge, we saw how some criticized him or abandoned the movement. Do you have any plans for attracting these people and for new organizational steps?

['Abdallah] This is an internal organizational matter which we are currently examining and discussing.

[Kadivar] When Dr. al-Shaqaqi was martyred, none of the Arab-Islamic countries, including Sudan, were prepared to condemn the assassination. But all the countries condemned Rabin's assassination and also competed on who would condemn this act sooner. Some even dared to directly condemn Rabin's assassination and describe it as a blow to the region. Others, who apparently did not adopt any stand or remained silent, called American officials on the phone or indirectly condemned the act. What is your opinion of all this?

['Abdallah] Reaction by the Arab nations was positive and considerable. The funeral service was widely attended by the people, however, the official stands of the Arab-Islamic governments are clear; they are revolving around America. Actually we are witnessing a dichotomy in the stands of governments and nations. There was only one clear case — the Islamic Republic of Iran — where the stands of the people and the government were the same. The leader of the revolution in Iran adopted a noteworthy stand. In Sudan, too, Dr. al-Shaqaqi's martyrdom was widely reported and they sent a delegation to attend his funeral.

[Kadivar] What are your comments on Rabin's assassination? Do you think that with Rabin's death and the choosing of Shim'on Peres to replace him, the peace and compromise process in the region will continue in the same way it did when Rabin was alive? Will this process speed up or slow down?

['Abdallah] This calls for detailed comments. As far as the current political conditions and the structure of the Israeli administration are concerned, I will briefly say that Peres is not any different from Rabin. Both of them directed the peace process, therefore, I don't think that Rabin's assassination will slow down the peace process. Actually I think that Peres will exploit this situation in order to strengthen his rule and to gain more American support. Also, there will be no changes in the stands of the other sides, that is, of Palestine and Syria.

Of course, it should be noted that the Israeli Government is a government that relies on force. This system is facing fanatical processes inside it, and these processes also resort to force to impose their will and views. Of course, we should not expect to see the outbreak of a civil war in Israel. But it is clear that there is no unity within the Israeli administration.

[Kadivar] What can be gleaned from your remarks is that there is no difference between Rabin and Peres. But it seems that efforts to speed up the compromise process have started since Peres came to power. Serious efforts — both overt and covert — can be seen, especially with the Israeli-Syrian talks, which top the list of Peres' programs. What is your opinion on this?

['Abdallah] Differing statements and comments may sometimes have been heard. But these differences were not substantial since both Peres and Rabin have the same principles. For example, there may be talk about meetings between Israeli and Syrian military officials and opinions in favor of or against these meetings may be voiced. But nothing is said about full withdrawal from Golan. Peres wants to negotiate with Syria, but apparently only for the sake of negotiations and not with the aim of solving problems.

[Kadivar] During the peace talks, no one was aware that the Palestinians were holding confidential talks, in parallel, with Israel in Oslo. These talks led to the Oslo agreement. Don't you think that in the midst of the [Syrian-Israeli] talks, there are also agreements or secret talks being planned? In the same way that the 10 Palestinian groups were faced with a fait accompli after the Palestinian issue was agreed on, don't you think it is possible for the same thing to happen with Syria? Unfortunately, sometimes at serious junctures, we have witnessed a passive stand on developments by the 10 Palestinian groups. If, in the near future, a peace pact between Syria and Israel is announced, what will the 10 Palestinian groups do? You know there is a great difference between a passive stand and an active stand.

['Abdallah] Our presence in Syria is a symbolic presence. The Islamic Jihad's main activities are concentrated in Palestine. The world has become a small village now and we can be active in any place we want to.

The peace talks are continuing and it has been said that next week talks will be held in Cairo. Nevertheless, anything that happens will affect the entire region.

[Kadivar] On the basis of information that I have in hand, a Hamas faction regards the self-rule government as an existing reality and intends to hold talks with it. Doesn't the Islamic Jihad intend to hold talks with the self-rule government?

['Abdallah] There are no contacts or talks between us and the self-rule government. The self-rule government arrests members of the Islamic Jihad with Israeli weapons and imprisons them.

[Kadivar] What is your opinion on talks with Hamas? In the discussions we had with the martyr Dr. al-Shaqaqi, he spoke about a rapprochement between the Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Have these talks continued and, basically speaking, what is your stand on this issue?

['Abdallah] There are continuous talks between the Islamic Jihad and Hamas on how to cooperate in confronting problems and incidents concerning Palestine. Hamas intends to organize the "National Islamic Liberation Party." But Hamas itself says it will not participate in the elections.

[Kadivar] Since you have pointed out that you will not hold talks with the self-rule government, naturally you will also not participate in the elections. How do you assess the outcome of the elections, especially since apparently Hamas has adopted a policy of double standards. Some officials inside Hamas speak of participating in the elections, while some forces outside it speak of boycotting the elections.

['Abdallah] You should ask Hamas this question. Hamas has officially announced that it will not participate in the elections.

[Kadivar] How do you see the future of the Palestinian problem?

['Abdallah] Despite all the negative signs that have become visible in a short time on the Palestinian scene, we see and we will see that despite the competition among the region's regimes to establish contacts with Israel, to normalize relations with it, and to increase cooperation with it, there are signs of the people's growing alertness to all this. The people are realizing the depth of the situation and the realities much better. They are much more aware of boundaries and they understand what an Israeli peace means, therefore, in the distant future, an Israeli peace in the region will be faced with extensive explosions of popular protest, and wars may even be ignited. The future of the Palestinian problem is linked with the future of Islam in the region. We can clearly see that this phase, despite all the existing difficulties, belongs to Islam. Islamic awakening and upsurge is not merely a regional phenomenon. We are also witnessing it on a global level. Even the Westerners say that the 21st century will be the century of Islam. Victory and the future belong to Islam, and Palestine is the issue that separates Islam from the West.

[Kadivar] Please talk to us about the unknown qualities of Dr. al-Shaqaqi. Since you answered the previous questions with such brevity, please answer this question in more detail!

['Abdallah] I think this is the most difficult question you have asked me to answer. Personally, I have a great feeling of grief about everything that has happened.

When Dr. al-Shaqaqi was arrested in Egypt on charges of having written a book on Imam Khomeyni, I recall that after his imprisonment I published some slogans about him, but he is not with us today, and we are facing a great tragedy. No words can describe my feelings for him. In other words, I cannot describe him as he deserves.

All the various aspects of his character actually made him an ummah, summed up in one person. Al-Shaqaqi was lighter than a spirit and stronger than a gun. He was an intellectual, an analyst, and a great leader, and many words are needed to describe each and every aspect of his personality. In short, he was a unique personality who lived under unique conditions.

[Kadivar] Did he go to Libya alone or was he accompanied by a delegation?

['Abdallah] He was accompanied by a delegation, but he was alone when he returned.

[Kadivar] Do you think that it was right for a jihad leader to travel alone under the current unique conditions?

['Abdallah] He was extremely cautious when it came to using certain facilities. I thought that the Libyan brothers were responsible for his safety during this trip.

[Kadivar] Do you think it is possible that the security systems of 'Arafat or of some countries played a role in this, that is, in conveying information and not as accomplices in the assassination?

['Abdallah] Currently we are not accusing anyone but Israel's Mosad for this.

[Kadivar] As my last question, I would like to ask you if you ever thought that you would succeed Dr. al-Shaqaqi as the Islamic Jihad secretary general?

['Abdallah] No one could have foreseen Dr. al-Shaqaqi's assassination. No one in the Islamic Jihad thought that he would be the one to succeed Dr. al-Shaqaqi some day. I also never thought that I would be given this position. But the reality of the Islamic Jihad's continuation dictates that someone undertake the heavy burden of carrying on Dr. al-Shaqaqi's duties.

Bethlehem Mayor Views Redeployment, Jerusalem

NC0812073095 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 8 Dec 95

[Interview with Ilyas Frayj, PA minister of tourism and antiquities and Bethlehem mayor, in Bethlehem, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue from Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] On the line from Bethlehem, we have Ilyas Frayj, Palestinian minister of tourism and antiquities and Bethlehem mayor. Welcome.

[Frayj] I thank you all, brothers in Cairo.

[Al-Miliji] Could you tell us the latest about the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from Bethlehem according to what is known as the redeployment according to the Oslo agreements?

[Frayj] The redeployment and withdrawal will be completed at dawn on 18 December, that is, seven or eight days from now [as heard]. The Israeli army has already started dismantling its installations and moving its vehicles. The Israeli police have almost completed their work and will vacate the police station within days.

[Al-Miliji] What about the Palestinian forces?

[Frayj] We have some Palestinian officers in the city and we are pleased to have them with us. But the main Palestinian force will officially enter the city on 18 December. They will be accorded an unprecedented, massive reception, because this is a historic occasion that we have long awaited. We pray God that as a Palestinian Authority [PA] we can help citizens and build a democratic Palestinian state in the full sense of the word.

[Al-Miliji] How many Palestinian officers do you have now?

[Frayj] Approximately 30. They live in Bayt Jala, a city west of Bethlehem.

[Al-Miliji] And when will they enter the main city?

[Frayj] They will enter the city in their official uniform and with their equipment along with the main force at dawn on 18 December.

[Al-Miliji] President Yasir 'Arafat will attend the Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem. Are there special preparations for this occasion?

[Frayj] The Bethlehem Municipality has officially invited brother President Yasir 'Arafat to join us in his official and popular capacity for the Christmas celebrations. The president welcomed the invitation and will join us at the celebrations, God willing.

[Al-Miliji] What do the citizens of Bethlehem feel?

[Frayj] Now that the tension is gone, there is more happiness and joy and there is more hope for a brighter future. People of every age, color, and ideology are happy that the occupation is over and that we the Palestinians and the PA will be responsible for running our own affairs and life and will have an army, a police force, and a Palestinian administration in the full sense of the word, God willing.

[Al-Miliji] We recently heard about tension between Palestinian citizens and the Israeli occupation forces in the West Bank towns. Are these reports true?

[Frayj] These reports were exaggerated. Only limited incidents occurred. Most of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples believe in the inevitability of peace and sincerely support it. There are extremists on the Palestinian and Israeli sides but they number under 5 percent of the population. The Palestinian and Israeli peoples are fated to live together in this holy land forever. Hence we are strenuously trying to reach a just and comprehensive peace and achieve comprehensive normalization of relations. We hope to build our Palestinian state, God willing. We also pray to God that the Syrian and Lebanese leaders will reach the desired peace with Israel. The peoples of the Middle East have had enough war, dispute, and conflict.

[Al-Miliji] Regarding the meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, what should we expect from it?

[Frayj] Most of the meetings between President Yasir 'Arafat and Shim'on Peres have been positive. I know Peres well. He is one of the major architects of the peace process and one of the most eager to ensure its success.

[Al-Miliji] But we recently heard a statement from Peres in which he eulogized Rabin. He said Israel will keep Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel. What is your response?

[Frayj] The Jerusalem issue is a very difficult and complicated one. Its resolution might come late. But we remember how Berlin was divided into East and West, how doors were closed and walls erected. The same now applies to Jerusalem. There are 160,000 Arab citizens in Arab Jerusalem and no one can agree to let East Jerusalem, which has the most sacred places for Christians and Muslims, remain under Israeli control and hegemony. The Jerusalem issue must be resolved. East Jerusalem is an occupied part of the West Bank and will become the capital of the Palestinian state. The issue is very difficult. We must be patient and deal with the issue wisely and with caution.

[Al-Miliji] But Minister Frayj, how do you explain the statements by Israeli officials, led by Peres and Baraq, on Jerusalem?

[Frayj] Peres and Baraq mean what they say. We should remember that Peres and Baraq will be fighting vicious elections in November 1996. This is why they are now using this language of propaganda in their statements. I can confirm that the Jerusalem issue is the most difficult problem remaining. But Israel cannot keep unilateral Israeli sovereignty, because this is unrealistic and unacceptable.

Second Group of Officers Enters Bayt Jala

JN0512162695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A second group of 23 Palestinian officers arrived at Bayt Jala at noon today to make the necessary arrangements for the redeployment of the Israeli occupation forces in the Bethlehem area and the entry of the [Palestinian] security forces.

Withdrawal of the occupation forces from Bethlehem and the entry of the Palestinian security and police into the city are scheduled to take place on 18 December.

'Arafat Adviser Denies Releasing Prisoners

JN0712161595 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan Kanafani, President Yasir 'Arafat's adviser and spokesman, denied Israeli press reports quoting Israeli military intelligence as saying that the National Authority released some Palestinians convicted by Palestinian courts. Kanafani said that no Palestinians convicted for security reasons were released and that none of the prisoners worked for the Palestinian police.

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Secret' Talks Said Held on Jerusalem Final Status

TA0712125495 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 7 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Steve Rodan]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] A Palestinian negotiator said yesterday that "senior Israelis and Palestinians" have been quietly discussing the future of Jerusalem for the last year, in preparation for the final-status talks scheduled to begin in May.

"Over the last year, there have been talks in different places over the world, including Jerusalem, with senior Israelis and Palestinians," said Ziyad Abu-Zayyad, an attorney and journalist, who chairs the Palestinian delegation to multilateral talks on arms control and is involved in Jerusalem affairs.

The disclosure by Abu-Zayyad, who was speaking at a Hebrew University conference on Jerusalem, was the first by either a Palestinian or Israeli official that the two sides are informally discussing the future of the city. Until now, Israeli leaders had insisted that Jerusalem would not be discussed with the Palestinians until the final-status negotiations begin.

Academics close to Minister Yosi Beilin acknowledge that they have been drafting plans on Jerusalem and discussing them with their Palestinian counterparts in an attempt to bridge the gap between the two sides before the start of formal talks in May. The academics include Haifa University Prof. Ya'ir Hirschfeld, who helped launch the secret Israel-PLO talks that led to the signing of the 1993 Oslo accord. [passage omitted]

Syria-Israel Signing Said Possible in 'Spring'

MM0812114995 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Sawsan Abu-Husayn: "Musa and al-Baz Tell AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: Peace Between Syria And Israeli Could Be Signed in Spring"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in an exclusive statement that the atmosphere is now more favorable than ever before for establishing peace in the region. Especially as Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has expressed clear willingness to agree with Syria on completing the peace. Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs, expects next spring to witness a Syrian-Israeli signing.

Minister Musa said following the talks between President Husni Mubarak and Peres in Cairo yesterday that the new year carries much optimism regarding the peace process, especially on the Syrian-Israeli track. He stressed that the atmosphere is now more favorable that ever before.

He added that the Israeli prime minister expressed his readiness for peace with Syria in order for all the tracks to be completed, while Syria is keen to engage in a full peace in return for a full withdrawal — something the Israeli prime minister now understands.

Dr. al-Baz said that next spring will witness the signing of a Syrian-Israeli agreement, and that this track should not be delayed any more. He described the Egyptian-Israeli talks as constructive, saying that they were conducted in an atmosphere of understanding and that all that could lead to peace was discussed. [passage omitted]

Algeria

GIA's 'Number 3' Killed by Security Forces

MM0812114595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 8 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "No. 3 in Algerian GIA Killed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, Algiers, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Algerian sources said yesterday that a prominent leader of the [Armed] Islamic Group [GIA] has been killed in a clash with Algerian security forces. The sources said that the murdered leader is Youcef Ben Tetraoui (36), who was close to the GIA's amir [leader], Djamal Zetouni, and number three among its leaders.

Ben Tetraoui, one of the "Afghan Arabs," was killed in an operation carried out by the Algerian special forces at his hideout in Tebessa, east of Algeria, last Saturday.

According to Algerian intelligence sources, a number of GIA members who have "repented" helped the security forces to find Ben Tetraoui's hideout, thus ending a search campaign that began in 1992.

The Algerian security forces' success in finding and killing Ben Tetraoui represents a retaliation for the killing of General Mohamed Boutigane, who was a personal friend of President Liamine Zeroual and one of his main supporters in the military establishment.

While the Islamic Salvation Army seems to have suspended its operations in Algeria, pending the outcome of the negotiations between the government and the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front, the GIA has intensified its operations recently. Its operations have claimed 20 lives in a number of areas in east Algeria.

FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS0712153395 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 6 Dec 95

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe" — quotation marks as received; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

The political indecision and the momentum for a genuine change!

Praise be to Allah!

Following the electoral campaign where "democracy and peace in Algeria" were amongst the most heard promises made to the Algerian people, the elections of the 16/11/95 and the climate generated just after and up to the Gen. Zeroual Speech to the nation, a certain momentum for peace has developed. This momentum was considered by the Algerian political class, as a valuable opportunity not to be wasted in order to "untie" the situation from its current unlocking. Following its usual path, the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] did not let the opportunity pass it by and has publicly extended "an arm to peace". The FIS initiative was interpreted differently by different observers and actors of the Algerian scene. This interpretation has varied from that of saying to the regime: "you have had what you wanted and the way you wanted it, let us not waist time arguing on the "how" while the Algerian bloodshed is going on and let us look ahead at what can be done to normalise the situation." to that of: "the FIS has recognised the "legitimacy" of the military regime". The FIS leadership did not find it necessary to enter an unnecessary debate on a false issue but had clearly and publicly made its readiness to find a solution to the situation. A political initiative like that at that particular moment and under these particular circumstances can only be qualified as courageous.

Everybody was waiting for something equivalent from the regime side but nothing of substance has happen on the political front.

The regime in order to mask its intransigence and therefore its lack of seriousness in dealing with the situation as it should be dealt with, has decided to close "the last" concentration camp in the Sahara desert and liberated 649 Islamists after having taking the precaution of transferring those labelled as "leaders" to the military prison of Blida. This initiative is in the absolute, a good gesture and makes those against all sort of injustice happy for the brothers and their families. However the exploitation of this gesture, by projecting it via the media, as a political initiative aimed as getting Algeria out of this mess is an exaggeration and if done intentionally will be an dishonest act which presages worst to come. It is important to clarify to those who do not know or those who have already forgotten about the origin of the presence of the brothers in the concentration camps in the Sahara including those at Ain M'Guel who have been released last week.

It was following the coup d'etat of 11 January 1992 that ten of thousands of FIS militants and supporters were arrested and send to the concentration camp without any trial or charges up to today. These detainees have not committed any crime whatsoever except maybe to be related in a way or another to a political party that had the guts to win free elections twice in a row "in a larger proportion than what it should have" according to the defenders of sending people to concentration camps. Most of the 649 brothers released were before their arrests, bread winners for whole families. The regime did not think about who would provide for the families left behind during these past four years of arbitrary detention. And more dangerously is the feeling that if the regime behaviour has not changed, these brothers will become the prime victims of physical elimination under the "chapter of war against terrorists" as it has been frequently the case of released Islamists after having done their sentences. So, if this initiative is genuine humanitarian gesture without any political manoeuvring attached to it, then it is just that. However, real and concert political initiatives are needed in order for the momentum for a better change, to pick up speed and or to "match" those of the FIS.

To the disappointment of the Algerian people, the war seems to have come back. The situation needs at least a political initiative of a big "psychological impact" foe it to change for the better. The release of the jailed FIS leaders could be such initiative that not only will bring change but also will provide very respectable figures that have the "potential" and the "charisma" to take vital and important decisions with the guarantee of their implementation on the "field of reality" which will then encompass a base as wider as possible.

The FIS jailed leaders have been put in prison on a political ground, their release can only be a political decision which will surely show how much of "independence" the "after-elections" authorities have managed to gain or not.

Despite the FIS capacity of generating valuable leaders at any given situation, the positions of such leaders as Shaykh Abbassi Madani, Ali Belhadj, Abdelkader Hachani...are almost unreplaceable when vital decisions are to be made. Whether some of those in power like or not, in these men rests an important potential for solving the Algerian armed conflict and bringing peace.

Finally, the Algerian people need to see if there a serious political courage in the other side of the conflict?

Some new lights on the Serkadji Carnage: Shaykh Cherrati was the first to be shot selectively!

On the 21/02/95, during the holy month of Ramadhan the Junta troops have cold bloodily killed more than 200 Islamists prisoners held in Serkadji prison.

The following are extracts from a "preliminary report on the Serkadji carnage which took place on the 21 February 1995" which was compiled with the join efforts of "The families of the victims of the detained in the Serkadji prison", the "National syndicate of lawyers", the "Committee of constituted lawyers" and "The Algerian league for the defense of Human rights". This final form of the document was dated on the 03 of July 1995. Appendix No 17: A mother in search for her son's grave testimony: T No S-15 Mrs Doumer Taouch FiFi mother of Taouch Reda born on the 13/04/74 at Bordj Menaiel and assassinated during the carnage of Serkadji on the 21/02/95: "My son used to work as a carpenter not far from home. On the 23/04/94 at 3 A.M some men with hooded faces as well as military paratroopers came to arrest my son at home. I have spent 14 days searching about his whereabouts but without any results. Each time I was told that he was not there until one day I received a letter from my son written from Serkadji. After a very hard work and very long waiting in front of Algiers court (where I had to be there by 6 A.M), I could visit him once every 8 days and then once every 15 days. Each time I asked him about his well being he said: 'This is what Allah wanted' (Masha Allah), I am with my brothers, my case is very simple, I have done nothing wrong, I will be out insha Allah, on the day of the trial." It was his nature, he was always smiling and never talked to me about his situation in the prison even though the other detainees talked to their parents about the bad treatment they were enduring. Each time he repeated to me that he will be declared innocent because there was nothing in his files.

On a Wednesday 21/02/95 I went to Serkadji prison to take few things (coufin) to my son, it was the month of Ramadhan, I found a crowd of people (women and men of all ages kept away from the prison), I asked what has happen: "something very serious" an old women answered me," there were shooting all night, but we do not know anything about the prisoners." I shouted:"My son!", I dropped my bag (coufin) and run towards a paramilitary gendarme and when he saw me coming he said to me: "Go away, we have killed all the terrorists." People were talking about our children being killed. Everyday we went to the prison until Monday morning. On Saturday, we went to the cemetery El Alia, we saw graves without signs, some (about twenty) have names. On Saturday at 4 P.M, I was in the cemetery when a firemen brigade came in five trucks and unloaded 55 cases (we counted them one after the other). They stayed until 6.30 P.M. The policemen have summoned us to go. The cemetery workers put the 55 cases in the graves. The policemen told us to go home and that tomorrow they will provide us with the list of names of people killed in Serkadji. On that same day Saturday but in the morning we did go to the morgue of the locality of Bologhine, there were 5 trucks in which the firemen were putting dead bodies in the cases. The policemen have prevented us to see. On Sunday at 8.30 A.M, I arrived to the El-Alia cemetery, some have been there much earlier. We waited until 14.30 to see the list of names. There were no list and the deaths were registered as "Algerian X"." [End of appendix 17] Appendix No 13: 1- Testimonies from detainees who have been woke up on the night of the 21/02/95 by people with hooded faces. 2- Testimony of detainees having witnessed the execution of Shaykh Yaklef Cherrati (Member of the FIS consultative council): T No-S-7: "I was sleeping when at about 2 P.M, people with hooded faces broke the cell and threaten us... They asked us to get out. They were wearing Jeans and sport shoes. Many detainees were already outside...with time the courtyards got crowded of detainees coming from everywhere." T No -S-10: We were woke up by heavy knocks on the cell door... We saw people with hooded faces who were trying to open them...these men were armed...one of them ordered us to get out and to join the other detainees... they then suddenly disappeared as if vanished." Testimony of detainees having witnessed the execution of Cherrati... T No-S-11 Cherrati was standing up, a copy of Quran in his hand, a big number of detainees have already gone to their cells or halls. Others were arriving to their cells, the tension was diminishing bite by bite, moves of the detainees and the cacophony was decreasing progressively as the detainees were regaining their cells. Cherrati was reciting the Koran with a low voice and from time to time will talk to the detainees advising them not to fall into the trap and not to respond to the provocations, because the weapons which were pointing at us are here to kill, "do not ever give them the opportunity to do it". The calm was almost restored when a shot was heard , people were running from every where, a "professional shooter" (tireur d'elite) who has been positioned on the top of the prison's roof has just hit Cherrati with a bullet in the head, he vacillated and dropped to the floor, blood was coming out of his wound, he articulated the last verses from the Koran. A detainee run to him, hold him in his arms but he was already agonizing, suddenly shootings were coming from everywhere. Detainees who did not reach their cells were falling like flies, many were wounded, in the back or in the legs, Cherrati was hit another time with a heavy shooting that cut his leg completely. With intermittence, the shooting will stop and from the roof, the armed men will throw ropes with hooks at the end and bring up wounded or dead detainees. It was like that Cherrati was taking up to the roof. In the cell I was in, five hand grenades were thrown, we stayed against the walls of the second cell which have served us as a refuge." Appendix No 14 Testimony of a detainee on the finishing up of wounded prisoners of cell No 25: T No-S-12

Some detainees were taken alive from their cells and executed immediately: El Oued, Bougueroun as well as Bouakaz...these last two were wounded and were finished up directly. Kacem Tadjouri, was searched for by people in civilian clothes... When they knew he was wearing a yellow jacket, they started looking for a person with a yellow jacket, when they have found him wounded in the cell they told him: "you with the yellow jacket, make a move!", when he moved, one of the persons in civilian clothes said he is still alive finish him!!! They finished him... Hocine Metadjer was recognised: It is him Metadjer? Kill him!!! The assassinations of detainees were precise and selective: Cherrati was the first to fall near us with a bullet in the forehead. In our cell many hand grenades were thrown from the aperture (guichet), then they will shoot through it...it is from there that I was hit by two bullets. In cell No 25, two detainees were completely burned:"I have seen a captain of the paratroopers marking the back of some detainees with a cross...these were immediately taken from the ranks and executed. In cell No 29 there were many wounded still alive... When they (army) went in, we heard shootings, the wounded prisoners were being finished after having been cut open with knifes and bayonets.

Echoes from the press: "The democracy of Pharaoh in Egypt"

Three weeks ago Hosni Mubarak have advised Gen. Zeroual to solve the Algerian conflict by organising legislative elections as reported in his interview to the French newspaper "LE MONDE". Everybody was surprised by what they taught of as a conversion of the dictator to a democrat. They had to wait until they saw in practice what kind of elections he was talking about in order to find out the invariable nature of the dictator as well as the type of advice he gave Gen. Zeroual. Following is an extract from an article written by Robert Fisk and published in the British newspaper the "INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY" in its issue of the 03/12/95. The title of the article was " Return of Pharaoh": "'Mubarak was different when he took over,' Magdi Hussein, a moderate Islamist and editor of the Labour party 'Al-Shaab', recalls. 'Mubarak was very humble person. He would telephone the leaders of the opposition, Ibrahim Shukri and the late Fathi Radwan. He was open to intellectuals. He told governors to stop sending him messages of congratulations, he was very reasonable, so his first years — from 1981 to 1986 — were very relaxed. But then when the Islamic opposition took 60 seats in the next election, he became angry. In all, the opposition took 100 seats [out of 444] and he swore never to let us have such a success again.' With the Americans pumping more than $2bn a year into the Egyptian economy as a reward for the country's peace with Israel, Washington studiously ignored those aspects of the Mubarak regime that cast doubt on its democratic credential. Mubarak refused to appoint a vice-president and his own elections began to assume Saddam-like proportions. In 1987 he won 97.1 per cent of the parliamentary vote; in 1993 96 per cent. 'It was in 1990 Mubarak decided to stay for ever, like Sadat,' Magdi Hussein believes. 'He stopped meeting leaders of the opposition...in 1993 he banned any activity against him to gain 96 per cent for the presidency. Saddam got 99 per cent this year and that is the difference between our democracy and Iraqi democracy- 3 per cent. This has nothing to do with Addis Ababa. It was gradual. Mubarak began a very harsh campaign against Islamic groups after 1993. He made use of military courts on a larger scale than ever before in Egyptian history, even more than Nasser and the British... But this government has no ideas, no ideology. Now Mubarak thinks he is a genius, that he is the best person to rule the country and he wants to go on enjoying the privileges of his post.' A more critical politician than Magdi Hussein — but one who fears Mubarak's wrath enough to demand anonymity — was more savage in his comments 'The worse thing about Mubarak is that he has no vision, secular or non-secular, leftist or rightist,' he said. 'His only vision is to stay in power,and this harms our country. He has no other vision — no vision about science, politics, the economy. And in his campaign to crush the Islamic movement, he has crushed democracy...'" "Torture is now routine at state security police headquarters in Lazoughy street in central Cairo. The military sentenced 54 Muslim Brothers -non violent Islamists who included doctors and lawyers — to jail just before last week's poll, including several election candidates. 'I know three of those arrested and tried,' Mohamed Heikel says. 'One of them was then head of a doctors' Union, another the head of students' organisation in upper Egypt. They were trying to play the democratic game. These were intelligent people who knew exactly how crude is the power of the state in a democratic country, and I cannot with a good conscience accept that they've done anything wrong. Yet they got five years. The catastrophe is that the regime really thinks it is popular." Woe betide the journalist who thinks otherwise." [end of quotation]

Egypt

Peres Concludes Meeting With Mubarak, Visit

Participates in News Conference

NC0712135595 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 1147 GMT 7 Dec 95

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres with unidentified domestic and foreign correspondents at the Presidential Palace in Cairo on 7 December — recorded; Mubarak's and Peres' opening statements in English; questions and answers in English, Arabic, or Hebrew, all of which are translated from the superimposed Arabic translation]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mubarak] I wish to welcome Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, a man I knew before he became prime minister. We also met when he was prime minister earlier. We had good relations with each other and extensive mutual understanding. I reached agreement with him on the Taba issue, which was a problem at that time. He showed much flexibility and tried hard to promote peace. We respect this quality. I am sure the Middle East problem will be settled with his help. I am confident that the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement will continue. I am also sure that negotiations will resume soon on the Syrian-Lebanese track. This will mark the end of the crisis and the war in the Middle East. We have already spoken much about the Middle East issue. Thank you.

[Peres] First, I want to thank President Mubarak for attending late Prime Minister Rabin's funeral. We respected the gesture. The Israeli Government and people appreciated that. We thank your excellency. I wish to congratulate the president on the recent People's Assembly elections, which came on the heels of the Consultative Council elections. These elections are an expression of Egyptian stability before the world. This is a big achievement. I have come here in the wake of a tragedy in our country. My duty is to carry on with my work. I came to consult the president on the next steps we will take. Ladies and gentlemen, let me announce that by the end of this month, December 1995, for the first time, the Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank will exercise self-rule and have their own towns and villages. I say this to assert that without President Mubarak's efforts, we would not have achieved what we have achieved on the course of peace. The progress between the Palestinians and ourselves was made here, in Cairo. We started with Gaza and Jericho and now peace is a fact. We must view this achievement in its historical perspective. After the agreement with the Palestinians was signed, it was easy to sign an agreement with the Jordanians. I am in Cairo now because we plan to open a new chapter with the Syrians. The president and myself believe we can reach an agreement in this regard. We will work jointly to attain the noble goal of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We are all willing to set aside our differences in views and focus on the basic issue. Thus our relationship with Egypt can be developed, particularly in the economic sphere. The next economic conference will be held here in Cairo and also a conference on desertification. I believe our meeting was constructive. I am grateful to his excellency the president.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, will the changes after the passing of Yitzhaq Rabin lead to progress on the Israeli-Syrian track next year?

[Mubarak] I am not speaking about changes in the Israeli Government. But what I can say is that before and after the changes the main goal of the Israeli Government and the main goal of all of us has been to achieve a comprehensive solution that will establish peace throughout the region.

[Correspondent] Is the Syrian side ready [for peace] in content as well as tone?

[Mubarak] I am confident that the Syrian side wants to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, what is your view of the idea of concluding a defense pact between Israel and the United States? Prime Minister Peres will submit such an idea to President Clinton in the next few days.

[Mubarak] Let us leave this issue for the discussions, not the press. I believe this subject is a bit premature.

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, in your interview with Egyptian Television in Israel after the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, you said the main objective of your government was to promote the peace process. After your talks with President Mubarak and Dennis Ross, who shuttled between Israel and Syria, is there progress on this track? What are the obstacles to a comprehensive agreement?

[Peres] I do not believe the peace talks are a matter of how and where. They mainly depend on hard work. Brick by brick must be laid. I feel more assured and optimistic after my meeting with President Mubarak. I had an opportunity to obtain his assessment of the prospects for peace. This assessment is very encouraging.

[Correspondent] Mr. Mubarak, what is your comment on some opposition parties' remarks on the government's interference in the elections?

[Mubarak] I think they know very well that the government did not interfere in the elections. The interference was by the candidates themselves and their supporters.

[Correspondent] Is Israel going to start an investigation in connection with the Egyptian POW's?

[Peres] We know the feelings of the Egyptians. The issue will take its course. We will have a good look at what happened.

[Correspondent] A question addressed to President Mubarak and Prime Minister Peres on relations between Egypt and Israel: What are you planning to do about terrorism following the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin?

[Peres] I think terrorism is becoming a problem in many countries—in the Middle East and elsewhere. We will take the necessary measures to fight it. Some states support, train, and fund the terrorists. We know this. The aim of terrorism in Israel is to kill the peace process. We should not allow them to do this. The Palestinians and the PLO are taking measures against terrorism. This is very important for the Palestinians. Like us, the Palestinians are interested in peace.

[Correspondent] The Israeli Government under Prime Minister Shim'on Peres still believes that Jerusalem is a united city. What is your opinion on this subject?

[Mubarak] We do not want to anticipate events. Jerusalem will be a subject for negotiation later, when its final status will be determined. The final status will be determined during the negotiating process.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, this is Cairo Radio: I would like to know: What specific ideas did you collect on your trip in Amman yesterday? What will you collect today in Cairo and tomorrow in Gaza? What is the objective behind this trip?

[Peres] I think the peace process with Syria and Lebanon constitutes a basic part of the regional agreement. Before meeting President Clinton, I felt I should be here in Egypt to hold negotiations with President Mubarak and also to hold negotiations with King Husayn and President 'Arafat. I feel that we have full support to proceed with the peace process and to take the third major step to achieve peace in the Middle East through responsible negotiations with the Syrians and the Lebanese. This will take place with mutual respect. We must hear what concerns the Syrians and about the problems that obstruct their route to achieving peace, because peace does not happen just to meet the needs of one side; it should meet the needs of all the sides.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, what are the chances of working out a document on which Israelis and Syrians can work?

[Peres] You have no patience. This will be achieved.

[Correspondent] What exactly is the obstacle [words indistinct]?

[Peres] The lack of agreement between Syria and ourselves is a major obstacle that we must overcome. We must also overcome some problems, namely, how to solve the problem of the borders, the problem of water, and how to make the appropriate security arrangements. We must agree on these arrangements when peace is achieved. We must not rush. We must begin the negotiations with the Syrians, not with the press.

[Correspondent] This is Nile TV International. According to news agency reports, you will visit Washington on 11 December. Will you discuss a defense pact with the United States?

[Peres] Basically, we will discuss the next step in the peace process and overcoming the difficulties between the Syrians and Israel. This is the main concern. Other ideas will also be discussed. I have no conditions but I have ideas.

[Correspondent] Will you cancel discussion of this issue in Washington? [question as heard]

[Peres] I will not cancel this idea; I agree with it.

[Correspondent] Does this contradict the peace process?

[Peres] If it does it will run counter to my visit. The objective behind my visit to Washington is to achieve peace, because peace is the greatest contribution to our region's security, including that of Israel and Syria.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak, under your leadership Egypt played a pivotal role to help conclude an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Will your excellency make fresh efforts in 1996 to settle the dispute between Israel and Syria? Are you optimistic about 1996?

[Mubarak] Egypt is really doing its utmost to ensure the success of the entire peace process. We must not forget that it was Egypt that began the peace process. Without this beginning we would not have reached the point where we are now. Before Egypt's initiative there was a total freeze in communication with Israel. The initiative made by the late President Anwar al-Sadat, the Camp David framework, and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty paved the way for a process of comprehensive peace in the Middle East, although this took some time to come about. Egypt will not abandon its role. Egypt has made great efforts for the sake of the Palestinian issue, the core of the Middle East crisis and its most complicated component. It will continue to do so. It will not hesitate to contribute to a solution on the Syrian and Lebanese fronts.

[Correspondent] President Mubarak, during the recent democratic exercise represented by the People's Assembly elections, there were some violent actions in some constituencies. How do you explain this phenomenon?

[Mubarak] I have answered questions like this before. About 4,000 candidates contested the elections. The political parties were participating publicly for the first time. We expected conflicts, not on the part of only one political party, nor because the government was interfering in the voting. It was the supporters of the candidates. Some of them wanted to break into the polling stations, some wanted to burn the ballot boxes, and some brought with them veiled women who entered and voted and then came back again with new identity cards to vote again. They were exposed. These were disturbances caused by the candidates and their supporters. The government did not interfere in the elections. Everyone can testify that the police did not interfere at all in the elections. What more can we do? The police were seeking to prevent acts of intimidation and breaking and entering. Had the police not intervened to stop the violence, still more disturbances would have occurred.

[Correspondent] Have you had any contacts with His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad since the formation of Shim'on Peres' new government in Israel? In your opinion what steps must Israel make with regard to the Syrian track?

[Mubarak] We have constant contacts with Syria. We have close ties and uninterrupted contacts with it. As to what we will do with regard to the Syrian track, I leave this to the negotiators themselves. A news conference is not the place to talk about it.

[Correspondent] This question is for Mr. Peres and for his excellency the president. Is there any room for joint action between Israel and Egypt and the other Arab countries against terrorism?

[Mubarak] First of all I wish to point out that terrorism is a phenomenon that is neither exclusively Egyptian nor Israeli. It is an international phenomenon. It does not need Egyptian-Israeli cooperation only. All countries must cooperate to stop terrorism. What is needed is not Egyptian-Israeli, Egyptian-French, or Egyptian-Algerian cooperation only. All countries must cooperate to solve this problem.

[Peres] Terrorism is spreading throughout the world. What is needed is an international role. Some countries fight drug trafficking. Fighting terrorism is an all-out process. Each country has its own way of fighting this problem. There is an international aspect to the fight against terrorism.

[Correspondent] What is your excellency's answer to the U.S. Administration's criticism of the elections in Egypt?

[Mubarak] The U.S. Administration did not criticize. There was merely talk by some Egyptian minority political parties and groups of a certain ilk. The United States, however, did not meddle in our affairs and did not ask us to carry out any investigations as some newspapers have claimed. Egypt is an independent, sovereign country.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, did you discuss with Mr. Shim'on Peres Israel's nuclear weapons in a period when the region is embarking on a wide-ranging peace?

[Mubarak] We discussed this subject before. Our stand has not changed. We are just waiting for the peace process with Syria to reach a conclusion because this is the excuse given. We must reach a solution to the nuclear issue, perhaps after one year, depending on when the peace process will reach a conclusion.

[Correspondent] Mr. Peres, are the relations between you and President Mubarak warm?

[Mubarak] I am very pleased that Egypt sincerely desires to promote the talks with Syria. This is very important. We are seeking to achieve understanding on all remaining issues with Syria. We have reached an understanding with President Mubarak on economic cooperation and other issues. President Mubarak is paying attention to the POW issue. We will appoint a retired general, who will come to Egypt to investigate what happened to the POW's during the wars with Egypt.

[Correspondent] Mr. Peres, after your talks today with President Mubarak, is there something new concerning the early warning systems on the Golan Heights?

[Peres] We did not discuss the early warning stations. We discussed how to achieve peace and not war.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Mubarak] I want to tell you that each country has its own circumstances. Jordan has a Palestinian population that has links with the Palestinians on the West Bank. Jordan's circumstances are different from Egypt's. Nevertheless, Egypt's relations with Israel are good. There is cooperation in many areas—in areas which I did not know but which I heard of recently. We do not want hot relations that burn; we want good relations.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, do you expect to meet with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad shortly to formulate a united stand in light of the U.S.-Israeli contacts?

[Mubarak] I meet with President Hafiz al-Asad frequently. He was going to visit me last week, but certain circumstances made him defer the visit. Perhaps, he will visit us next week or the week after according to our circumstances. Our meetings continue. We discuss the Middle East problem and bilateral relations constantly. We hold periodic meetings with President Hafiz al-Asad.

[Correspondent] Regarding His Majesty King Husayn, there are reports of an imminent Jordanian meeting to revitalize the peace process on all tracks in the Middle East?

[Mubarak] Jordanian meeting with me?

[Correspondent] Jordanian-Egyptian meeting.

[Mubarak] We meet and chat on the telephone. There is no problem between us and Jordan, unless you want to create a problem.

[Correspondent] There are no problems; a meeting for coordination.

[Mubarak] Yes, we coordinate constantly. We contact each other constantly.

[Correspondent] [Question indistinct]

[Mubarak] We leave this to the negotiations. I do not want to say this to the press. Thank you.

Views Peace, Economics, Security

NC0712214595 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1837 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA)—Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has stated that without the efforts exerted by Egypt and President Husni Mubarak, it would not have been possible to keep the Middle East peace process going. He added that 20 days from today there will be a Palestinian administration and a Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

This came in statements he made during a meeting with the board chairmen and chief editors of Egyptian newspapers before leaving Cairo today.

Peres reaffirmed Israel's commitment to all its promises. He said Israel will continue the peace process with Jordan. He added that his ambition right now is to reach peace agreements with Syria and Lebanon. When this happens, peace will prevail in the Middle East and the whole region.

Peres stated the importance of economic cooperation in any peaceful settlement "because a settlement without economic cooperation is not what the world has been looking forward to." He expressed the belief that the danger of violence will continue unless economic cooperation is realized.

Peres added that there are poor countries, such as Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia, that have managed to achieve an economic boom, not because they have lots of money, but because they have adopted sound economic policies. He said it is imperative to have a sound economic structure to improve the people's standards of living.

Peres said it is impossible for the economy of any country to have a preponderant influence over the economy of another country by surprise. This rule applies to Israel's and other countries' economies. He affirmed that Israel has no ambition to dominate the economy of other countries. However, Israel is willing to offer any possible assistance to other countries. Referring to Egyptian- Israeli agricultural cooperation, he said this cooperation has been completely successful without any hegemony.

Peres referred to what he termed as "the unfriendly tone" of the Egyptian press toward Israel. He said the media greatly influence Egyptian life and that "it is important to benefit from past experience."

Asked about the possibility of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria before the Israeli elections, Peres said the two sides have so far shown complete readiness to work for peace. He said the talks between Israel and Syria are deadlocked over security issues. The talks have not yet tackled other issue, such as economic relations and water rights. He said that any change in Syria's stance will be reciprocated by a change in Israel's stance. In such an event it will be possible to achieve peace with Syria before the elections.

Peres said Syria must adopt dramatic steps to achieve progress on the Syrian-Israeli track. He said that achieving peace is more important for him than winning the forthcoming Israeli elections. He noted that there are still 11 months before the Israeli elections and he hopes great progress will be achieved during this period.

Asked about the military agreement recently signed between Israel and Russia, Peres said Israel is not asking Russia to defend it. He, however, declined to disclose the contents of the agreement. He indicated that the agreement includes the exchange of information about the two countries' military structures. He described the Israeli-Russian agreement as a neutral military agreement [ittifaqan 'askariyan muhayidan].

Peres expressed the belief that it is high time to mull over a formula for collective security in the Middle East. He said "we are no longer enemies. So why don't we reach an agreement on deterring dangers." He, however, went on to say that it is premature to implement such a formula for collective security in the Middle East.

Peres reiterated that Israel has achieved progress on the Palestinian and Jordanian tracks. Israel is prepared to achieve similar progress on the Syrian track.

At the news conference, Peres referred to some issues affecting Egyptian-Israeli relations, but he refused to elaborate. He said he discussed these issues during his meeting with President Mubarak today and voiced his hope that they will be settled.

Regarding Jerusalem, Peres stressed that Jerusalem will remain Israel's capital and that it will not become another "Berlin." He said that as far as religion is concerned, visiting holy places in Jerusalem will be guaranteed to followers of the three religions.

He noted that Jerusalem's population is now about 600,000 most of whom are Jews. He added that the registration for elections now being conducted by the Palestinian Authority revealed that the smallest percentage of Arab population is in Jerusalem.

Peres commented on the possibility of Jerusalem being two capitals, one Palestinian and one Israeli. He said this is not possible "because it involves very complex aspects." He added that this would also entail the existence of two sovereignties in the same city which requires partition, asking: Why should we do this?

Peres expressed his belief that the bigger the economic blocs, the better, referring to the economic cooperation accord between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. He remarked that still the United states is seeking to expand this cooperation to achieve better results by joining blocs with Asian countries. He said the Middle East needs such a grouping because it is entering a new era "witnessing international changes."

Replying to a question on where economic cooperation within the peace process stands among his priorities, Peres said: For example we have made peace with the Palestinians, but if it is not backed by economic development, it will be a very fragile peace. He emphasized that peace accords must be supported by economic agreements.

Toward the end of the meeting, Peres answered a question on articles hostile to the Arabs appearing in Israeli newspapers and whether such reports reflected the true public opinion in Israel. He said the Israelis hold varying views and that some of them support peace and others oppose it. He added: We acknowledge that there is a minority opposed to peace and we cannot say that there is unanimity on one particular view.

He invited Egyptian media to visit Israel for direct dialogue with Israeli writers on such issues and added that this will be a great contribution. He said Egyptian journalists are invited to visit Israel, move freely anywhere, meet any person, and write what they want.

He attributed the hostile articles and views on both sides to what he called "lack of information" not to any personal hostile feelings or bad intention.

Winds Up Visit, Departs

NC0712150695 Cairo MENA in English 1430 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA)—Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres left here today following a few hours' visit to Egypt during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak.

Peres was seen off at the airport by his Egyptian counterpart Dr. 'Atif Sidqi.

U.S. Coordinator Dennis Ross Pays Visit

Arrives in Cairo

NC0712150595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1436 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA)—Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace talks, arrived in Cairo this afternoon for a visit of several hours.

This visit is part of Ross' current tour of the Middle East. He was received at the airport by U.S. Ambassador in Egypt Edward Walker.

Meets With Mubarak

NC0712161395 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Mubarak received Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace talks, this evening. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa; Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs; U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker; and Mark Parris, special assistant to the U.S. President for Near East Affairs.

Concludes Visit, Departs Cairo

NC0712210395 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1950 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA)—Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace talks, left Cairo this evening following a several-hour visit to Egypt. He met with President Mubarak during the visit.

Ross was seen off at the airport by U.S. Ambassador in Cairo Edward Walker.

Musa Comments on Peres, Ross' Visit to Egypt

NC0712164395 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated that the Israeli prime minister's visit to Egypt today is very important and aims to revitalize the peace process. In a statement to our radio, Musa underlined Egypt's role in the peace process, affirming that Egypt is interested in promoting this process, especially since Israel is party to all Arab-Israeli tracks.

Regarding the visit of Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the Middle East peace process, Musa said Ross is discussing the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process during his current shuttle tour.

Musa affirmed that it is necessary for Israel to adopt a positive attitude toward the outstanding issues between Egypt and Israel, such as Israel's nuclear weapons. He noted that such a positive attitude will help improve bilateral relations.

Opposition Parties Win 13 Seats in Runoff Elections

NC0712154095 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi held a news conference this evening to announce the results of the second round of the People's Assembly elections held yesterday. The Interior Minister said 193 candidates from the National Democratic Party, six candidates from the Wafd Party, five candidates from the National Progressive Unionist Grouping party, one candidate from the Liberal Party, and one candidate from the Nasirite Arab Democratic Party won seats in the second round of the elections. A hundred independent candidates also won seats.

The Interior Minister said the turn-out in the second round of elections was 49.73 percent of the total number of registered voters.

Committee Reports Election Violations

NC0812112595 Cairo AL-'ARABI in Arabic 4 Dec p 5

[Report by Khalid Salah 'Abd-al-Fattah 'Abd-al-Mun'im: "From a Neutral Report by the Independent Follow Up Committee: Expulsion of 40 Percent of the Opposition and Independent Candidates' Representatives; 600 arrested, including 37 women"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has reiterated its claims of full honesty while the opposition confirmed that there was extensive rigging. We have yet to see a neutral view as reported by the Egyptian committee following up the elections.

The independent committee was made up of public figures and a number of nongovernmental organizations. Its work was coordinated by Dr. Sa'd-al-Din Ibrahim and Dr. Milad Hanna. It collected the data for its first report from hundreds of observers who followed up on the activity of the electoral committees.

The report began by stressing that the committee was not biased to state organs or any other political parties or forces. The report noted that the committee's work followed up the activities in 88 electoral districts that covered all of Egypt's governorates, from Aswan to Alexandria and from Sinai to al-Wadi al-Jadid.

The report revealed that the government monopolized all the media organs during the elections campaign. It cited a double standard in the state organs' operations. The government and the official media tried to show neutrality and objectivity. The parties' speakers were given ample opportunity by official television to appear on the screen for up to 40 minutes, which was double the time given them during the 1990 elections. Despite this, the report said that this did not give equal opportunity to all the political parties because radio and television are the state's monopoly. These organs, it added, were used mainly to highlight the ruling party's achievements, as did the national press with the exception of AL-AHRAM which, uniquely among the national press, highlighted the programs and views of candidates other than those of the National Democratic Party [NDP].

The report stated that the government's most important positive actions were its appeal for voter participation and the assurances given by the president, the prime minister, the interior minister, and other senior officials that the elections would be honest and fair.

The report monitored the performance of the parties and candidates during the campaign. It confirmed that a large number of people, unprecedented in Egypt's parliamentary history, nominated themselves for People's Assembly seats. There were more than 4,000 candidates; more than two-thirds (3,150) were independent candidates. The parties had less than 740 candidates. Some candidates began canvassing before the campaign officially began and some parties published their programs early. The candidates conducted their campaigns with unprecedented enthusiasm. It was evident that a lot of money was spent on the elections campaign despite the ceiling set by law on such expenditures (5,000 Egyptian pounds).

Regarding the candidates' complaints during the elections campaign, the report stressed that they focused on three issues. The first concerned favoritism of the NDP in the treatment of candidates and parties when the choice for electoral symbols was made. The NDP gave itself the symbols of the crescent and the camel in all governorates. But the same consideration was not given to the other parties. The Muslim Brotherhood candidates complained that the government deliberately gave them all electoral symbols that inferred terrorism, including the sword and pistol. The second issue concerned complaints about the propaganda campaign itself, particularly after the Interior Ministry issued a decree banning the holding of outdoor rallies, marches, and mass gatherings and threatening to break them up by force or arrest the candidates who violated the order. But these instructions were not applied to NDP candidates. The third complaint noted in the report was that some candidates were harassed and pushed, their signs torn, and their posters removed. The committee received about 1,100 complaints. The committee confirmed the validity of 264 complaints—23.6 percent of the total. It said it could not check the validity of the other 76.4 percent.

The statement monitored election management violations, including the failure to update and check voter registers. It became clear that the registers in 55 out of 88 electoral districts contained names that were duplicated 20 times in several committees. It was confirmed that this was no coincidence or error. The registers also contained the names of dead people in about eight percent of the districts. This was in addition to the judiciary's confirmation of blatant violations in Nasr city. The NDP also enjoyed the privilege of using public transportation [for campaign advertisements] in Greater Cairo during the propaganda campaign, which violated the principle of equal opportunity and neutrality to which the government committed itself and that senior officials had emphasized.

The voter turnout was weak, because the majority of people had given up hope of seeing a fair and free election. This was confirmed by an opinion poll conducted by the "Ibn-Khaldun Center" in which 60 percent of citizens believed that the elections would not be honest. The result of this poll was echoed by another opinion poll conducted by AL-'ARABI and published two days before the elections. The figures produced by the latter poll were close to the first in terms of fear for the non-fairness of the elections.

The report spoke of the chaos and confusion witnessed by most of the committee's field observers as a result of the inability of many citizens to locate their voting stations. As a result, a number of citizens rioted for being denied the chance to exercise their political rights. This has made more than 20 percent of voters give up on trying to find their names [in the voter registers].

Instead, they decided to go home in indignation without casting their ballots.

The report emphasized that it had received more than 1,240 reports containing complaints by candidates. The committee verified several of them; the most serious being the detention of more than 600 people, mostly from the Muslim Brotherhood supporters, who were supposed to act as delegates for the brotherhood's candidates. In addition, the committee referred to the use of violence and the storming of the women's voting stations, such as in the al-Duqqi and al-'Ajuzah constituencies [in Cairo], where 37 women were arrested. Although they were released the next day, the action itself proved that it had been both deliberate and preplanned.

The report noted the delay in opening some voting stations for more than three hours. When they were opened, NDP delegates were found inside the stations. These reports accounted for 17 percent of the complaints received by the committee. The report noted that some heads of voting stations refused to open the ballot boxes to ensure they are empty, an action that accounted for 12 percent of the complaints. This has raised doubts by some candidates about the stuffing of some boxes in advance, which was indeed the case in seven constituencies, where the supervising judge discovered the incident after being informed of it.

The report referred to the deliberate expulsion of candidates' delegates from voting stations although they carried notarized power of attorney, as required by law. They were expelled allegedly because their power of attorney was not signed by the competent police officer. Complaints over this issue accounted for approximately 40 percent of the total complaints received by the committee, which number 1,240. The report noted that approximately 30 percent of the complaints involved the expulsion of delegates from voting stations. The delegates complained that they had been allowed to enter the station and carry out their work. Then all of a sudden, some people, presumably police officers in plainclothes, walked into the station and expelled the delegates. Any opposition to the this measures resulted in physical assaults. The report cited cases of beatings, as was the case with Dr. Hilmi Nammar and his wife, who reported the matter to the police. The committee noted the shootouts and clashes, which left several people dead.

The report observed cases where delegates were expelled from the voting stations before voting ended (at 1700). A number of thugs and policemen in several stations closed the ballot boxes and candidates' delegates were denied the right to accompany the boxes, something that resulted in replacing or tampering with the boxes.

The "statement" recommended that the government attempt in the second round on Wednesday [6 December] to clear its image and dismiss any suspicions of collusion or rigging, leaving the choice to voters, by undertaking a number of measures. Most importantly, the government must republish the voter registers for every constituency, post them at police stations, bring more judges to supervise and be present at the ballot stations, enable candidates' delegates to obtain the official approvals and be present throughout the voting and vote counting processes, and allow national and foreign journalists and national and international monitoring and follow up committees to make their observation.

In conclusion, the report stressed the need for voters and candidates not to give up hope in the worthiness of democratic practices and to turn up for the run-off elections. The report hoped that the excesses, suspicions, and red-tape that have created resentment in the first round will be avoided.

The committee held a meeting the day before yesterday under the chairmanship of Dr. Milad Hanna and Dr. Sa'd-al-Din Ibrahim. It was attended by Sulayman Shafiq, Hisham Mubarak, and a large number of representatives of committees participating in drafting the statement. Dr. Sa'id al-Najjar [committee chairman] could not make it to the meeting because he is abroad.

Committee Criticism of Election Challenged

NC0712080395 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2335 GMT 6 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 6 Dec (MENA)—A responsible high-level source has said that a statement issued by the Egyptian committee [of intellectuals and public figures] following up the first round of the People's Assembly elections runs counter to the truth about the fairness and impartiality of the election process.

In a statement tonight, the source noted that the committee statement referred to some positive aspects regarding the elections, such as the government's eagerness to appear neutral and objective; assurances by the head of state, prime minister, interior minister, and senior officials on the fairness of the elections; the unprecedented number of candidates; the participation of 56 Coptic candidates; and the committee delegates' acknowledgment that campaigning was calm in over 60 constituencies. But the statement contradicts the truth in some of its details.

The source cited as evidence some ministers' failure to win in the first round, the prime minister's brother and National Democratic Party [NDP] candidate losing to an independent candidate, urgent decisions made by the interior minister to apply the law against individual excesses, everyone's legal entitlement to challenge the election results, and permission to allow individuals to run as independents regardless of their affiliation. The source added that the government did not prevent the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood or its members from running in the elections, whether as independents or under party banners. Nobody was killed or wounded by the police, who did not interfere at any polling station unless the station chief asked them to end clashes or investigate an incident.

The source added that although the statement acknowledged several positive aspects, it made several errors, using figures and percentages to make the information in the statement seem accurate, objective, and credible. The source pointed out that it was out of place for the statement to do this, adding that it did not give the real picture of election proceedings. The source noted that the statement relied on complaints by candidates, their delegates, or voters as a base for its data. These figures, the source added, did not reflect facts or real excesses, but mere complaints. The source noted that the statement cited figures obtained from an opinion poll conducted by a center without explaining the method of the poll, the sample polled, the sample's figures, or how representative the sample was. The statement included figures that committee members could not have obtained through field visits or observation.

The source added that the statement used two main sources for its information on the election process: Delegates' observations and candidates' complaints. But 60 percent of the accusations against the election reflected candidates' complaints, while reports by the committee's delegates were more objective, which indicates that the statement used unreliable sources. The source noted that according to the statement, 60 percent of the complaints came from Muslim Brotherhood and Labor Party candidates. The source added that the Muslim Brotherhood is outlawed but the State permitted people of various trends to nominate themselves as individuals regardless of their political affiliation. Sixty percent of the complaints may have come from the Labor Party and Muslim Brotherhood, but their candidates do not carry significant weight compared with the thousands of candidates from other trends, the source added. Accordingly, relying on information and complaints from one area contradicts the neutrality the statement tried to portray.

The source criticized the use of expressions and terms such as "official candidates." "Some observers believe that what happened with the Muslim Brotherhood and Labor Party candidates and representatives raises suspicions that events were planned."

The source said these words are anomalous and that making allegations based on suspicion renders the statement devoid of any scientific character.

The source also criticized the statement's allegation that giving parties 80 minutes on radio and television to state their case did not give them equal opportunities, since the media are the State's monopoly. It said: This allegation is untrue. All the parties were given fair time despite some having far more candidates than others. The media complied with the information minister's instructions not to let any candidate appear on radio and television programs. The television reviewed Egypt's achievements over 14 years and did not attribute them to any particular party, because they are the achievements of an entire people.

Referring to the statement's criticism of the period before the elections, saying voters lists were not checked or corrected, the source said that this is baseless criticism, because the Interior Ministry opened the electoral lists for three months at the end of last year, urged all citizens to register their names, and tried to correct the lists. It added that no party has any interest in frightening the voters or in making things difficult for them.

Referring to the statement's use of the expression "lack of equal opportunity and the absence of neutrality pledged by the government and officials and permission to the NDP alone to use public transport to campaign in greater Cairo," the source said that this accusation is baseless, since propaganda was delivered through advertisements paid for from the NDP candidates' propaganda budget.

The source added that allegations that voters' interests and their participation in voting were normal contradicts the committee's statement of unprecedented enthusiasm during the election process.

The source criticized the statement's aimless talk about so- called large-scale rigging. It said this allegation is not backed by figures or facts and that the statement itself conceded that the violations were committed by all the parties, yet it ended by falsely claiming that most violations were committed by the State or under its nose.

The source stressed that election day proceedings were supervised by the judiciary. It said: All the State organs recorded all the events and positions of all the parties and played their role in maintaining security. Yet despite this, over 50 people were killed or wounded in clashes among the candidates and none of them was killed or wounded by the police. State employees were among the casualties.

The source concluded by saying that the truth that all fair people should admit is that these elections were another step forward in consolidating democracy and the rule of law in Egypt.

Labor Party Statement on Election 'Rigging'

NC0712121095 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 3 Dec 95 pp 1-2

[Statement issued by the Labor Party: "The Elections Are Rejected and the Coming People's Assembly Is Illegal"; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Political and Executive Bureaus of the Labor Party met under Engineer Ibrahim Shukri on 2 December to study the situation following the catastrophe of comprehensive rigging of public elections for the People's Assembly in light of the report presented by the party's central committee on following up the elections.

The opposition parties' accusation that the government rigged the elections is not new. We have always exposed its plans to do this. We have stated in memorandums and official meetings that the law on exercising political rights and the Interior Ministry's measures were opening the door wide to rigging. The government's insistence on ignoring our views and on persisting with these loopholes confirmed its intention to use them to achieve its objectives.

As the elections neared, signs of rigging increased. Our party said that Law No. 93 for 1995, restricting the press and expressions of opinion, was aimed at silencing honest writers and enveloping the elections in threats and intimidation. The military courts were then used to try public figures who were preparing to fight the elections. The aim was to stop them becoming candidates and to reinforce the threats and intimidation.

When the door to nominations was opened, we put on record that the government was using the State's media and public money in a manner that was not compatible with the political system, which is based on party plurality. The ruling party monopolized these resources as if they were its own private property or as if we were still under a one-party totalitarian state.

The opposition candidates were prevented from using any means of communication with the electorate during the elections. Meetings and marches were banned in all the electoral districts. Even election statements and posters were banned in many districts.

Realizing its isolation from the people and in light of the majority's insistence on the need for change, the ruling party peaked its rigging on election day, 29 November. Unprecedented rigging took place that day, Egypt's rulers' tradition of fame in this field notwithstanding.

The rigging included voting, where the use of false instead of genuine votes has become the practice. The foul play was not confined to vote counting but to the announcement of the results as well. The official results in some constituencies were repeatedly announced over the radio and television, only to be later altered by the Interior Ministry with obvious political calculations. An example of this alteration is what happened with [Labor Party leader] Ibrahim Shukri and [National Progressive Unionist Grouping leader] Khalid Muhiy-al-Din. Following the announcement of their victory, the Interior Ministry went back on what it had announced. As a result, the Labor Party leader, who for 50 years and under various regimes has never lost in his Shirbin Constituency, was made to lose. As for Khalid Muhiy-al-Din, they decided to let him enter the run-off elections instead of winning in the first round. This practice was repeated in several other constituencies.

In light of the above, the Labor Party rejects the results of the election held on black Wednesday [29 November], which were invalid and rigged. The assembly that will result from this election is invalid and its decisions lack legitimacy. The Labor Party calls on all parties to voice clear stands that expose the rigging and underline the invalidity of the current elections. We tell the regime's officials: What you have done will not drive the people to frustration but will motivate them to be more determined to unseat you. We have always sought rotation of power by peaceful and organized means through general elections, but you dissolved this hope when you totally destroyed the principle of free and fair elections on Wednesday, 29 November 1995. By shutting the door to peaceful change, you are inciting the youth to resort to violence. It is impossible for the youth to bear with this government or similar governments for five more years with what is known about it in terms of corruption, impotence, and abandonment. The people will not tolerate an invalid parliament that matches the government in its malignant goals and schemes. The people are determined to seek change and your standing in the way of this determination is a threat to security and stability. We ask God for mercy and pray that He will Guide them away from the deviation in which they are involved.

The party leadership will continue to meet in the coming stage, God willing, to consider the methods that need to be adopted for political action and legitimate opposition to straighten out this erroneous situation. The party will consult with the various political forces in this regard, for the matter requires a reevaluation of national calculations by everyone for the sake of the nation and the people.

In conclusion, we declare our extreme appreciation for the solidarity of the Egyptian people in the face of rigging. The party leadership salutes its heroic candidates who fought a fierce battle in high spirits and with sincere honesty. Our party has not entered the election battle just to get a number of representatives to the People's Assembly. Another equally important goal is for the nation to awaken and to rally around its honest citizens. O party members: You have carried out this honorable mission, so be patient, persevere, and stand your ground until God signals our final victory over the forces of oppression and tyranny. God is great and long live the people.

NPUG Leader Says Elections Fair in Kafr Shukr

NC0712190495 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1755 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Dec (MENA)—Khalid Muhyi-al-Din, leader of the National Progressive Unionist Grouping [NPUG] party, has stated that the election process, in which he took part in Kafr Shukr constituency in al-Qalyubiyah Governorate, was free and fair. He said that his preoccupation with his election campaign did not enable him to follow the other election campaigns throughout the republic.

In a statement issued today, Muhyi-al-Din said the assessment of the election process across the country is the responsibility of the NPUG's elections central committee.

Violence Flares as Election Results Announced

NC0712204395 Paris AFP in English
2019 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 7 (AFP) — Dozens of people were injured and more than 100 others arrested on Thursday [7 December] as violent protests erupted across Egypt after the results of legislative elections were announced.

Meanwhile four vote-counters drowned when their minibus plunged into a canal near al-Mansurah in the northern Nile Delta region after the driver lost control.

A shoot-out between supporters of rival candidates in Kafr al-Shaykh, 140 kilometres (90 miles) north of Cairo, left 24 people injured, three of them seriously. Nineteen arrests were made.

A general and a policeman were injured in violent demonstrations in the town of Abu Kabir in the northern al-Sharqiyah province. Protestors angry at election results ransacked the regional telephone exchange, the town council and two banks, set fire to railway lines and hurled stones at police in Abu Kabir. Twenty-two cars and a bus were damaged before police used tear-gas to disperse the crowds.

In Abu Hammad, also in al-Sharqiyah province, 50 followers of an independent candidate were arrested after attacking rival supporters, while in al-Jizah, southeast of Cairo, a crowd of 100 people blocked roads with burning tyres to protest the results. Twenty arrests were made.

The elections were plagued by partisan violence which left 33 dead and more than 100 wounded in the two rounds, contested on Wednesday and on November 29. Opposition parties won only 14 seats or three percent — their worst ever showing since multi-party elections began in 1979 — and accused the government of massive fraud.

The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) of President Husni Mubarak won 317 seats, while independents, most of them pro-NDP, took the remaining 113 of parliament's 444 contested seats.

Dailies View Election, Opposition's 'Limited Role'

NC0812090695 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0605 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Dec (MENA)—The results of the second round of Egyptian parliamentary elections announced yesterday occupy the main headlines of today's Egyptian papers. The papers highlight President Husni Mubarak's emphasis during a news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres that neither the government nor the police interfered in the elections. The papers also highlight President Mubarak's denial of reports that the U.S. Administration demanded an inquiry into the elections, adding that Egypt is an independent and sovereign state.

Under the headline: "A Commitment to Broaden the Democratic Edifice," AL-AHRAM editorial notes that the election has revealed that all attempts to distort the democratic experiment in Egypt failed, particularly after the real weight of all the trends and quarters promoting this false campaign came to light. This campaign, the paper adds, is refuted by the facts and evidence witnessed throughout the stages of the election process.

The paper notes that the election has also disclosed the absence of any significant role by those with high-sounding statements who make a living out of echoing slogans. It has also revealed the limited role of the opposition parties in getting close to the average citizens and responding to their ideas, inclinations, and principles. This is due to the fact that many of these parties are detached from reality and have steered away from the concerns and problems of the various classes.

Under the title: "Let Us Turn a New Chapter for the Future," AL-AKHBAR calls for turning the chapter on elections as soon as possible so that everybody can get back to their own work and make an effort to restore peace and calmness. This would help the new People's Assembly begin its activity in a spirit of brotherhood and national cooperation. The paper refers in this regard to the regrettable incidents that took place in some constituencies, in which several people fell victims.

In the meantime, the paper criticizes some of the parties that participated in the elections in the hope of gaining the people's votes while citizens knew nothing about them. The paper notes that these parties's main concern was to criticize the government justly and unjustly without bothering to get closer to the broad masses of voters or exerting any effort to help resolve the citizens' problems, thus not establishing for themselves broad bases of support for their candidates in any future elections.

Western Sahara

UN Plan on Western Sahara Said To Favor Morocco

BR0812120095 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 7 Dec 95 p10

[Report by "I.C.": "New UN Plan Favors Morocco in Sahara"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Madrid — Morocco has still not won the self-determination referendum in western Sahara, but is about to score a point which will enable it to win when the referendum takes place. Within the next few days the UN Security Council will be passing a resolution which will give UN Secretary Butrus Butrus-Ghali the go-ahead to change the criteria for identifying voters in the referendum in such a way as to favor Rabat, according to diplomatic sources.

Aware of the growing weariness which the stagnation of the preparations for the referendum — originally planned for 1992 — is causing among the permanent members of the highest UN body, particularly in the United States, Butrus-Ghali submitted a new report on 24 November with proposals to unblock procedures for identifying voters.

MINURSO [UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara], the UN force in Spain's former colony, has already identified 58,000 people without encountering major difficulties in the process, but Rabat is insisting on recognition being extended to another 150,000 alleged Saharans, two-thirds of whom live in southern Morocco and the rest on the territory. They all belong to tribal groups which formerly represented only 14 percent (some 10,500 people) of the census carried out by Spain 20 years ago.

The POLISARIO Front [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro], which is fighting for the territory's independence, refused to take part in the identification of these voters. To overcome this obstacle Butrus-Ghali had so far proposed that their registration in the census should be accepted if they could submit Spanish documentary evidence of their birth or that of their fathers in the colony, or of the fact that they had been residents there for a certain period of time.

Changed Criteria

In his report submitted last month, the UN secretary general changed his opinion and proposed accepting not only Spanish but also Moroccan documents proving the 150,000 would-be voters' Saharan origin. To carry out the identification of residents in Morocco, MINURSO will have to open offices in the south of that country, and MINURSO officials are concerned that thousands of false documents will be submitted to them. In Butrus-Ghali's entourage the proposal is being upheld by arguing that identifying people does not imply accepting them as voters, and it is also being stressed that the POLISARIO Front may appeal against any decision.

The highest UN body will shortly approve a resolution accepting Butrus-Ghali's proposal and urging him to go ahead with his plans to hold the referendum as soon as possible. He will threaten to actually withdraw MINURSO's 354 men if, by the end of his term of office, conditions have not yet made it possible for the Saharans to go to the polls. Maintaining MINURSO costs approximately 680 million pesetas.

Kuwait

Commentaries View Normalizing Ties With Jordan

'Warming' of Relations Seen

96LH0042B Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 15 Nov 95 p 29

[Article by Dr. Shafiq Nazim al-Ghabra, professor of political science at Kuwait University]

[FBIS Translated Text] Considering the future relationship between Kuwait and the "opposition" states, particularly Jordan, as a U.S. imposed decision on Kuwait is wrong. If this were true, Kuwait would not have rejected the United States' request to end the Arab boycott of Israel. One can say that the pressure on Kuwait was not the result of American positions. The change in Kuwait's position depended on several factors, and the United States and its policy was only one of them, and not the main one.

Real changes in the Jordanian position during the past several months are dictating the restoration of relations between Kuwait and Jordan. At a news conference with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Jordan in October 1994, King Husayn condemned attacks by one Arab country against another. The Jordanian position changed more dramatically following Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil's defection to Jordan. King Husayn delivered several speeches signaling such change. Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad met with the Jordanian foreign minister a few weeks ago. Several Kuwaiti delegations visited Jordan within the framework of international and Arab conferences. It is no secret that confronting extremism in our area demands the restoration of relations among the Arab countries facing such a threat. The peace process is among the issues on the agenda of all the Gulf states, and this process is of interest to Kuwait in one way or another. The restoration of relations with Jordan by the other Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, has reinforced Kuwait's inclination to restore its relations with Jordan.

What is taking place now is part of the warming up that precedes the establishment of relations. There are many examples of states that broke off their relations and then began warming up toward each other. The United States has restored its severed relations with China following a ping pong game between the American and Chinese delegations. This paved the way for Kissinger's visit and then for U.S. President Richard Nixon's famous visit to China at the beginning of the seventies. China lost 1 million dead in its war against the United States in Korea. The United States also suffered thousands of dead and wounded in its war against the North Korean and Chinese forces.

Admittedly, Kuwait has not rushed to restore its relations. The wound has taken its time to heal. The conflict between Kuwait and Jordan turned into condemnation, accusations, and alienation. However, Jordan has reviewed its calculations and positions. It has already declared its support for the UN resolutions on Kuwait and Iraq, causing Kuwait to make a similar review of its relations in favor of normalization with Jordan.

On the thresholds of 1996, we find that the issues and positions in our region have changed. New interests are developing in new directions.

As we think and write about this matter, let us keep in mind that Kuwait is still facing signs of relative or medium tension with the Iraqi regime. Any move by an Arab or foreign state, entity, organization, faction, or group to distance itself from the Iraqi regime and its policy will be favorable to Kuwait in the short and the medium range. This is reinforced by the fact that, in Iraq, the chances for change are equal to the chances for repression, the chances of a civil war and anarchy are equal to the chances of the regime remaining in power for a medium period, and the chances of the sanctions remaining in effect are equal to the chances of Iraq exercising some violence and causing some tension against Kuwait. Therefore, the establishment of a broad front of friends will help to contain any simple or serious confrontation with Iraq. In this respect, coordination can help in defending the region's security. The least it can do is cause Iraq to accept the relevant UN resolutions, which will prevent it from repeating its aggression against its neighbors. Political responsibility, as we wrote in January 1993, demands that we expand the front of friends. This could be the shortest way to defend stability and expand the front of states that depend on stability in the Middle East.

Commentary Favors Normalization

96LH0042A Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 15 Nov 95 p 29

[Article by Dr. 'Abdallah Khalifah al-Shayiji]

[FBIS Translated Text] In international politics, relations between states change. Small states usually pay a higher price through pressure or extortion, a carrot and stick policy, or opposition to them during catastrophes, tragedies, and attacks because they are the weak party in the equation of strategic interests.

Therefore, when Kuwait fell victim to aggression by fraternal and friendly neighbor Iraq, these states, which we called the "opposition states," supported the Iraqi aggression or kept silent about it. They denounced the Western and U.S. forces, which came to defend the Gulf and expel the Muslim Arab aggressor who violated the integrity of a state and the honor of its people.

No one blames the Kuwaitis for the positions they took against those brothers, who danced, rejoiced, demonstrated, applauded, and donated blood and money to the country that attacked, raped, killed, and tortured the Kuwaitis. They forgot the victim. They applauded and became cheerleaders [preceding word in English] for the aggressors.

However, realities and international politics change. Some changes have taken place in the countries we classified as opposition states after the liberation. We classified the North African countries as the least hostile. Yemen and Sudan were second on the list. Jordan and the PLO were placed on the list of states that did not support us, disappointed us, and voted against us or abstained at the Cairo conference on 10 August 1990 and during and after the invasion.

International politics and foreign policy should not be managed, influenced, or dictated by public opinion. Foreign policy and a country's self-interests change. This is a main principle of realpolitik [preceding word in English], where no permanent interests, permanent enmities, or permanent friendships between states exist. What exists are changing interests.

What is the situation now after five years? What happens to us? Where are we going? We have restored our relations with the North African states, particularly with Algeria and Tunisia, to embassy level. Our relations with Yemen began to warm up since this summer following positive statements by Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Parliamentary Speaker Abdallah al-Ahmar. The same applies to Jordan, which has called for change in Iraq even before Husayn Kamil al-Majid's defection to Jordan. The time has come for change.

We in Kuwait have made some conditions to restore normal relations. These included the need for an apology and the need for these states to use their relations to make Iraq release the prisoners and implement the UN Security Council resolutions.

After we heard the apologies, we dropped this demand. All what we are asking today is for these countries to recognize that an invasion had taken place, that Iraq should implement the UN resolutions, and that they must use their relations with Iraq to secure the release of the prisoners.

No permanent friends or permanent enemies exist in international politics. Wisdom demands that we look beyond our reality and lick our five-year-old wounds and grief, particularly in view of the policies of fraternal or friendly states that supported us during the past five years.

All the Gulf states, including our big brother Saudi Arabia, have restored their diplomatic relations with the opposition states. The Saudi ambassador assumed his post in Amman a few days ago. Shaykh Zayid has called for reconciliation. At a news conference in Kuwait on 4 November 1995, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs called for the restoration of relations with Jordan. He said that this would be in Kuwait's strategic interest, because the danger to Kuwait is not from Jordan but from Iraq, and we must maintain the pressure to weaken Iraq.

No one denies that Jordan supported Iraq during its invasion of Kuwait. However, we must not be left out of the influential circle and remain isolated in the region. We must not be the black sheep among a herd of white sheep. Some people might say that these states, which restored their relations with the opposition states, did not face what Kuwait faced during the invasion, and that restoring the relations is easier for them.

However, the increasing trend is to restore the relations with the states that follow the path of peace, particularly with Jordan. Yemen, as an Arabian Peninsula state, will probably be next, and then perhaps the PLO.

The term "opposition states" was a product of the events that took place then. No Kuwaiti will stand against the Arab interest and against the Arab World's unity and solidarity from the Ocean to the Gulf. The element of time is, what we call, an equalizer [preceding word in English], which clears the hearts, but no reconciliation should be at Kuwait's expense, but in its interest.

Article Views Iraq, Arab Reconciliation

96LH0028A Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 25 Oct 95 p 25

[Article by Dr. Shafiq Nazim al-Ghabra, professor of political science at the University of Kuwait: "Regarding Shaykh Zayid's Call To Lift Sanctions on Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It would be wrong to think Shaykh Zayid's call to lift the sanctions on Iraq and for Arab reconciliation was made in a vacuum or that it came in a moment of inattentiveness or misjudgment, and it would be wrong to think this of similar calls, made by Arab League Secretary General 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and still others.

Some have been open and well-known, while others have occurred far from the light of day; these are politically worthless calls, but it would be mistaken to think they are going to cease. Indeed, we expect them to mount with the passage of time and on all occasions. Once again we go back to the basics in the world of politics, basics which people do not accept for emotional reasons, and for political reasons as well. For in politics, states are allied with states, and states prefer to deal with states which abandon their hostile policies and which control their land, instead of fragmented states pursuing civil war and fighting. This is one of the reasons the international forces stopped at a certain point during the war to liberate Kuwait. The states prefered, in the end, to deal with those who are assured of remaining in power and capable of staying at the helm in light of the change in their policies, out of fear of the unknown and of sudden change. This explains the stand of most Arabs vis-a-vis the flight of Husayn Kamil, and it is nothing new in politics, nor is it strange in the Arab world or in the West. States are the first to abandon those who fail the test of time, even those who were always allies and friends.

Thus on the subject of the sanctions, which have lasted more than five years, and the subject of Saddam Husayn, who won 99 percent of the vote, it calls attention, in terms of legitimacy, to the leadership in the Arab world — because 99 percent is a very common statistic throughout the Arab world. The primary question in the mind of Arab policy makers is: will the Iraqi regime remain to govern Iraq in the years to come, or is it falling apart on the verge of collapse? In another sense, are its chances of remaining similar to those of other regimes, or are its chances of survival weak? That is the question now, and the answer, one way or the other, is what dominates the positions and which tells us whether Shaykh Zayid is in error.

If we take the view that the Iraqi regime is on the verge of collapse, barely maintaining its control over its capital, and that the south is on the verge of sliding out of its control, as Husayn Kamil asserted in his press conference, when he fled, then talk of lifting the sanctions or of reconciliation is certainly both wrong and dangerous. Indeed, if we assume the ability of our brothers in the Iraqi opposition to get their act together within a year or two, taking control of the initiative, then it would be appropriate to embrace the opposition seriously (not just verbally) and to impose even more sanctions on Iraq. While I find myself supporting this analysis, finding it to be the best one, it is regrettable that this analysis may not be the only one or the true one of conditions in Iraq. Let us remember that the countries of the region, among them the Gulf states, Egypt, and Syria, have not embraced Husayn Kamil because they see him as a factor favoring Jordan, Israel, and America primarily, and they see in this penetration a serious belittling of them and their role. Hence Husayn Kamil has been blocked in this region before he could get started internationally. The same is the case with the opposition: the countries bordering Iraq have not embraced the Iraqi opposition as they should have, for many reasons relating to their abilities and political tendencies.

On another front, let us return to the question of collapse. If we assume that the collapse of the Iraqi regime is possible, we also find that this possibility causes genuine fear among the Gulf and Arab states. These fears confirm that after the collapse of Saddam's dictatorial regime, it will be difficult (I am not saying impossible) to find an alternative to it in Iraq, apart from lethal chaos and the possibility of breakup. Thus many observers see this as one of the major reasons Saddam has remained in power this long. Indeed there are Arab as well as international fears that should the Iraqi regime be pushed to the wall, leaving it no acceptable outlet in the end, and after the imposition of the UN resolutions, there will be a chance for real military adventures on the part of Iraq, which is capable of mounting them, and whose outcome would be the harming of the countries of the region, including Iraq (and the crisis of October, 1994 is an early and primitive manifestation of this possibility). Hence Shaykh Zayid faces a delicate balance, and he is supported by Qatar, Bahrain, and Egypt, out of fear of things even more dangerous to all.

The basis of all this is: leave the internal affairs of Iraq to the Iraqis, and the question of changing the regime to the Iraqi people, not the neighboring countries; in another sense, the neighboring countries have begun to tend to create a basis for dealing with those who rule Iraq, founded on international legitimacy, the resolutions of the UN Security Council, and peaceful coexistence, while leaving internal affairs to the Iraqis, to deal with them however they like; they would support whomever the Iraqi people decide upon. In another sense, the new thing is the lack of desire on the part of the Arab and Gulf states to interfere in the political affairs of an Arab country, in order to change its regime, as Iraq did in its aggression against Kuwait. The countries seek what seems to us to be a search for a policy that does not make Iraq's original error the Arabs' constant and recurring error, out of fear that this model for changing ruling regimes with outside support might become an acceptable method among the Arab countries in the future. Fear of this becoming the principal mode of Arab relations has played a part in Shaykh Zayid's position.

Now Saddam Husayn, in stages at least, is reasserting that he has a firm grip on the reins of power inside

Iraq; indeed if the situation in Iraq had been liable to explode, it would have exploded when millions of people gathered at the farcical ballot boxes. We know that Ceaucescu and the Shah of Iran, in their final months, could not even assemble a small crowd to give a speech without causing a blood bath. So in this plebiscite (in spite of its ridiculousness), Saddam benefited in the sense that he reasserted his control over the situation in Iraq and confirmed that the army and the Republican Guard were not on the verge of mounting a coup against him. Actually, the recent internal changes, which have restored some regard to the army and the party, at the expense of the family in Iraq, are moving in this direction. The regime is now compelled to follow up on these changes, including the change of the atmosphere of the repressive police-state policy in Iraq. These changes could bring down the regime in the end, but could also prolong its life and strengthen its internal mechanism. Either way, Shaykh Zayid's call for a Gulf withdrawal from the internal Iraqi scene, focusing on Iraq's compliance of UN resolutions, remains the sole condition for potential relations and conciliation.

It can be said that the best thing the sanctions have accomplished so far and the best thing they will do in the future — hence their importance — is the improvement in the behavior of this regime (and its age) and its readiness to rethink many of its aggressive policies. If this is true, then in this context Shaykh Zayid's call might be appropriate, if its point of departure is change in Iraq's behavior and positions, and its compliance with the Security Council resolutions. This would naturally reflect positively on inter-Arab relations, regionally and internationally. That is because the other scenarios are worse, politically, militarily, and economically, for the countries of the region; the choice is between various evils, some less harmful and others more costly and harmful. All of this may wait until after the upcoming U.S. elections, especially given the exodus of Husayn Kamil and the crisis created by the regime in Iraq.

From now on, the countries are ready for anything, and Shaykh Zayid's call must not be viewed from a point of view of total rejection or total acceptance, nor must it be seen as the last such call. It must be viewed primarily as reflecting a reality that might in the future become a policy acceptable to the Gulf and the Arab world. But we must note that the ball is in now in the Iraqis' court: if Iraq follows up its compliance with the UN resolutions and stays committed to them, then this call for Arab reconciliation will find attentive listeners among others, but if Iraq goes back and resumes its trickery, masses its troops, and makes threats, as it has done in the past, then this is a call that will fade away like past such calls; at that point the push for change will again rise to the surface of events.

Expectations From National Assembly 4th Session

96LH0029A Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 2 Nov 95 p 7

[Report by 'Abd-al-Latif al-Du'ayj]

[FBIS Translated Text] A few days after the elections to the present National Assembly, the General Federation of Kuwaiti Workers invited me and Deputies Khalid al-'Idwah and 'Adnan 'Abd-al-Samad to a symposium to talk about the new National Assembly and its weak and strong points. The two deputies agreed that the Assembly, with its strong parliamentary alliances, can represent and impose the people's will better than before. However, I concluded that although the present Assembly included many qualified representatives, it will be unable to achieve the many hopes the people have pinned on it, because of the existence of conflicting and competing blocs. Furthermore, the accumulation of problems and issues caused by the suspension of the previous Assembly, the invasion, and most importantly, the state's budget deficit, will make it difficult for this Assembly to respond to the people's demands.

The past three legislative sessions confirmed what I said. There has been an overwhelming feeling of disappointment with the National Assembly and its inability to realize the hopes pinned on it. I must point out that my evaluation of the National Assembly's performance and judgment of its failure or success was based on its ability to win the people's admiration for its political positions or their sympathy and gratefulness for its financial achievements, as previous governments and assemblies had tried to do. The people exaggerate when they talk about the National Assembly's failures or weak performance, because they misunderstand the nature of its work. The National Assembly is not an executive body to be held accountable for the accomplishment of plans or the solution of problems. This is the government's business. The Assembly only supervises the government's performance and enacts legislation or approves government-initiated bills. One can say that the Assembly has been lax in supervising the government, abandoned its authority, or delayed the enactment of laws. However, it would be unfair or illogical to claim that the National Assembly has achieved nothing for the voters and that the people are totally displeased with its performance.

Therefore, in the absence of the financial resources that were available to previous assemblies, the present Assembly's accomplishments for the people are zero. Acting unilaterally after the invasion, the government exhausted most of the remaining public funds on buying the sympathy of the people and "sweetening" the bitterness of the invasion. The government's generosity was manifested in providing subsistence allowances, paying overdue salaries for the invasion period, compensating people for their steadfastness, canceling debts, providing free housing, and so forth. The National Assembly could do nothing but add verses to the government's song by insisting on adding some groups that had not been able to benefit from the government's grants and awards after the liberation. For example, the housing law still represents an important parliamentary dream. The National Assembly should score some tangible achievements. It should make the people become aware of its interest in them, instead of wasting its time on sterile discussions of unpopular issues, such as the debt law and its amendments, or invisible or intangible accomplishments, like the public property protection law and other legislation.

In such an atmosphere of frustration and sense of impotence, and pressured by the need to achieve quick and tangible gains, some deputies, unfortunately, have resorted to demonstrative actions and even activity outside the Assembly. Had the deputies not suffered from the illusion of weak accomplishments, they would not have escalated the issue of the change in educational curriculums into a non-confidence motion in the education minister and caused a political crisis that preoccupied the country for several weeks.

The lack of financial resources has led to coolness in the relationship between the deputies and the people who elected them. This has prompted some deputies to abandon the priorities of national action and disregard the basic principles in which they believed to boost their reputation among the people. Thus, for example, the bill on the early retirement of women was passed by many deputies who belonged to the progressive bloc. They were supposed to oppose such a bill, because it was costly and contradicted their policy to liberate women and strengthen their role in society. This was done at a time when the Assembly has strongly opposed an austerity policy and the imposition of taxes, because they would affect the deputies' popularity. The continuation of the present spending policy would clearly aggravate the financial crisis and put more burdens on the future generations. In fact, no one puts much blame on the deputies, because it is difficult to comply with the government's plans or the IMF's advice when the government was spending generously to correct the economic course and re-float the banks and the local trade.

The Assembly may have not scored clear and tangible successes to satisfy the electorate and realize its financial dreams, because of the state's financial weakness and the consequences of the invasion. However, the Assembly's principal role in supervising the government and enacting legislation has suffered very much because of the accumulation of laws that followed the liberation and the new political challenges posed by the change in the people's views and interests after the liberation. This was not the only challenge or real problem facing the Assembly. The success of the parliamentary political trends and their semi-complete victory over the government's forces and wings, particularly against some veteran Assembly members like 'Abd-al-Karim al-Juhaydili, Jasir al-Jasir, Rashid al-Juwaysiri, 'Abbas al-Khudari, and others, made the people pin exaggerated hopes on the Assembly. The alliance of all the political forces under the slogan of the return of democracy and the implementation of the Constitution appeared formidable and influential. It was a strong alliance at the time because of the challenge it posed to the government. However, when the elections ended and the new Assembly began its term, the alliance was dissolved and the Assembly members followed their own trends and interests. Many people discovered that the opposition or the parliamentary forces did not wield much power or influence. The party that wielded the most power and influence was the government, which was able to rally support from all blocs and trends. Unfortunately for some, particularly the religious trend, they discovered this fact too late, after submitting bills that the people and the Assembly totally rejected. Everyone remembers bills on such religious matters as the call to prayer in Kuwait, the women's veil, the closing of markets after the call to prayer, the need to wear the traditional garments. These did not even win the chance for debate in the Assembly or its committees because they contradicted the country's laws and Constitution. This has greatly weakened these trends and recently even contributed to a rift in them.

The political trends' alliance during the election campaign, their unity or participation in demanding a return to parliamentary life and implementation of the Constitution, and then their great victory over the government's trend in the last elections, have led to a false sense, among them and among the people, in general, that they are in control and the strongest in the National Assembly. This sense was particularly strong among the followers of the Islamic trend. Based on this false sense, they exaggerated their evaluation of the present National Assembly. Some people thought that it was the strongest and best National Assembly in Kuwait's history. Actually, the overwhelming sense of liberation and freedom after the invasion and the people's strong inclination toward democracy following the bitter experience of the invasion—which was caused by dictatorial rule, failure to contain or resist it, and the absence of popular participation—contributed to the exaggeration and overestimation of the National Assembly's capabilities, but at the same time they provided a real challenge to the Assembly, because the popular feeling was even stronger than the feeling of the political blocs and politicians, in some cases. This is, in fact, the tragedy of the present National Assembly. It has failed to realize the hopes pinned on it. Many supporters of the present Assembly think that its performance during the past three sessions was normal and its accomplishments were within reason and what was expected. However, a comparison between it and previous assemblies shows that the present Assembly has been lax and less able to face the government and the political crises than previous assemblies.

Again, we wish to emphasize that we appreciate the circumstances of the present Assembly. We realize the effect of these circumstances, particularly the state's financial deficit, which is paralyzing the government's and the Assembly's activities, on its accomplishments and decisions. Therefore, our comparison of the Assembly's performance will not be based on the people's satisfaction with it and its legislative accomplishments, but on the nature of its relations with the government.

No legislative session has passed without a real crisis or a clash taking place between the Assembly and the government. This has often resulted in one of them losing in the face of the other's insistence and stubbornness. In most sessions, the National Assembly scored a victory over the government either by imposing its views on it or by its members adhering to their positions and sacrificing the Assembly itself. The deputies' insistence on adhering to their positions and supporting the Assembly's rights and prestige has led, more than once, to a decision to dissolve the Assembly.

In 1963, the National Assembly toppled the government in Kuwait. Conflict reached its height in the same Assembly over the agreement on oil revenues. The government threatened to dissolve the National Assembly, but the majority insisted on rejecting the agreement, and the Assembly won. In 1967, the Assembly entered into an open conflict and challenge with the government. The majority suspended the Assembly's meetings for two weeks, forcing the government to submit to it. In 1971, the conflict over oil issues again caused a crisis between the government and the Assembly. The crisis started over oil production limits and exacerbated over the government's share in the industry. This was followed by months of discussions and conflicts, which ended with the government's agreement to the 50 percent share demanded by the opposition. The government then went further by deciding to completely nationalize the oil industry.

In 1975, the relations between the Assembly and the government became strained over many issues, the most important of which was the government's foreign policy. There was much talk about peaceful solutions and current affairs in the Gulf states. This led to the dissolution of the National Assembly for the first time. The Assembly that followed the dissolved one in 1981 was the weakest in Kuwait's history. Religious forces and many independents with conservative views dominated this Assembly. It contained no traditional opposition forces. Conflict in this Assembly raged over a government demand to amend the Constitution. The Assembly stood fast in the face of the government's pressure and enticements, and the proposal was dropped. The Assembly that followed was dissolved after it succeeded in forcing the justice minister to resign and insisted on supervising the activities of all the ministers.

The above review shows that all the National Assemblies have experienced basic conflicts with the government, which always ended either with the Assembly's victory or its dissolution. The government did not score a victory in any of them, and the assemblies did not retreat or even reach a compromise with the government.

In the present Assembly, fierce conflicts and crises have taken place with the government. However, most of them have ended with the government's victory and some of them in compromise solutions that safeguarded the dignity of the two sides. The first government victory was the passage of the debt law. The Assembly suffered another defeat when some popular committees were dissolved. They included the committee on Kuwaiti prisoners and hostages, those chairman resigned in protest. The government then scored another victory by reducing the number of ministers from the National Assembly to five from six. The Assembly originally demanded that the government should include eight Assembly members. In the major crisis that was known as "article 71," the issue was resolved outside the National Assembly through a gentleman's agreement, whose details were unknown. Although this seemed as a victory by the Assembly, the fact that the crisis was resolved outside the Assembly and the Assembly approved the bills it objected to shows that a compromise had been reached and that the ultimate winner was the government. This was evident when the amendment to the debts law was passed by a large majority, although Speaker al-Sa'dun and the Islamic trend, which we thought was the largest in the Assembly, had mobilized and armed for several months against it. This is besides the Assembly's defeat in the confrontation that took place with the education minister over the non-confidence motion issue and the passage of the coeducation bill [qanun al-ikhtilat].

The present and the previous governments have posed a real challenge to the Assembly. These governments were dominated by technocrats, but also included members from certain trends in the National Assembly. This has represented a strong challenge to the Assembly members, including the opposition, who are finding out, in most cases, that they are criticizing themselves when they criticize the government.

Furthermore, the debt law has greatly restricted the activity of the opposition, particularly the business sector, which has fallen under the government's mercy. The fate of many enlightened forces, on which the deputies depended to strengthen popular opposition, has become dependent on the government's position and its policy to solve the difficult issues of the debt and the trade damage caused by the treacherous invasion. While the government has become free to act, the Assembly's freedom has been restricted and its opposition forces have been deprived of the many popular and media resources they depended upon in confronting the government. If we add all this, we can easily find out the reasons for the Assembly's retreat and the government's strength.

Finally, we go back to where we started. In that symposium I said that I feel pity for this Assembly, because the hopes pinned on it are greater than its capability and the challenges facing it are greater than its resources. I think that the reality clearly proved this point. The Assembly's final session could further prove or disprove my conclusion, which is possible but seems most unlikely.

Invention Contributes to Desalinization Efforts

96LH0016A Kuwait AL-QABAS in Arabic 23 Oct 95 p 10

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwaiti Scientist Dr. Usamah Muhammad al-Hawwaj, instructor at Kuwait University's schools of engineering and petroleum and mechanical engineering and industry, has invented a system that further develops the desalinization technology. He has registered his invention in the United States.

The system this young Kuwaiti scientist invented is considered a new scientific and technological development in the field of desalinization. It can produce sweet water in larger quantities and at less cost. This will be determined after the scientist and Kuwaiti scientific and research institutions conduct a technical and economic feasibility study. The invention will prove that Kuwaitis can contribute to progress and prosperity not only in Kuwait but for all humanity. This accomplishment entitles the University of Kuwait to be proud of its staff and their scientific contribution.

In an interview with Dr. Usamah al-Hawwaj, he said: This invention is a sophisticated design in water desalinization technology, using multi-stimulus effect. Previous methods depended on water evaporation in groups of horizontal or vertical pipes to which sea water is pumped. Although this system has proven its effectiveness in desalting water, it still suffers from problems of salt deposits on the surface, which negatively affect its function in the long-range. Such systems are very complex and their production, installation, and maintenance are very expensive.

He said: In this new invention, we expect to overcome some important problems that existed in the previous systems. The new system uses thermal efficient conical evaporators that can be produced from conductive and anti-corrosive metal sheets.

Besides their good thermal efficiency, these evaporators are less prone to the accumulation of salt deposits on the surfaces. These conical evaporators are assembled in a cylindrical container made of metal or heat-resistant fiberglass, forming what we call a phase. A number of these phases are assembled vertically in what we call a desalinization tower. The required quantities of sweet water can be produced by using an appropriate number of towers. The developed system is very simple and can be produced, assembled, and maintained easily.

Dr. al-Hawwaj added: One good characteristic of this system is that it is vertical, which means it occupies a small area of land to produce a specific quantity of sweet water. From outside, it looks like a cylindrical tower, about 10 meters high and 2 meters in diameter. It can produce about 200 cubic meters of sweet water per day.

He said: Another characteristic of this system is that it is more suitable for use with a medium energy source, such as solar energy, which is available in this area. Therefore, we think that this will be the ideal system for water desalinization in the future, considering that oil energy is exhaustible.

Dr. al-Hawwaj said: We hope to begin building small units of this system to conduct the necessary tests and confirm its technical and economical feasibility. This will take place in cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Electricity and Water Ministry, and the Kuwait Foundation for Scientific Advancement. After verifying its technical and economic feasibility and conducting tests on bigger models, we hope that a water desalinization industry will be established in the Gulf region that will provide large quantities of sweet water at the lowest possible cost for our future generations.

He said: The idea of inventing a water desalinization system has been my dream since I was at the university. I only began seriously thinking about it after I received my doctorate degree. I believed that water desalinization was the most important technology in the Gulf region after the oil industry. As we know, natural water is scarce in the Gulf region. The methods currently used are expensive in terms of energy consumption, equipment, and maintenance. Demand for water and the cost of energy are expected to increase in the future. We may have to turn to alternative energy sources. The existing desalinization stations have a certain life span and should be replaced with new ones. Therefore, it was very important for us to learn advanced water technologies to reduce the cost of desalinated water, taking advantage of our local resources. We must solve the water problem for our future generations and not depend on the industrial countries to solve this problem for us, because they do not have a water problem as we do.

Dr. al-Hawwaj added: Several years ago, I designed the initial system and registered it in the United States. I was granted an invention certificate in 1995. Since then, I have been developing it theoretically to make the system produce water less expensive than the present systems. It is a very efficient and simple system. We can easily produce, assemble, and maintain it.

Qatar

Amir Briefs Cabinet on GCC Leadership Dispute

LD0712174895 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1530 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, the beloved amir of the country, chaired an extraordinary meeting held by the council of ministers this morning at his office at the amiri court. Following the meeting, His Excellency Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Khalid Al Thani made the following statement:

[Begin recording] [Bin-Khalid Al Thani] His highness [the amir], may God safeguard him, briefed the council about the conditions and circumstances which led Qatar to withdraw from the final session of the 16th Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] which was held in the Sultanate of Oman between 4-6 December [1995]. His highness expressed his great appreciation for the efforts which the brotherly Sultanate of Oman undertook, under the leadership of Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, and the warm welcome which his highness and the accompanying delegation encountered. His excellency the amir made the following address:

[Amir] In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. Your Excellencies the Deputy Prime Minister, the ministers, the noble Qatari people, I deliver this speech on the occasion of the end of the 16th session of the GCC Supreme Council which was held in Muscat and the circumstances surrounding it, so as to place before you all the facts and to state to you clearly the position of Qatar regarding this issue.

At the beginning I would like to extend great gratitude to my dear brother Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id for his hospitality and welcome. [passage omitted]

I also extend great gratitude to my dear brother His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, for his good and honest efforts to resolve the crisis which arose from differences in views regarding the appointment of the new GCC secretary general. I wished that this dispute had never happened or that it could have been resolved by brotherly means which would satisfy all parties.

We have no objections that the secretary general is from one of the GCC members because we are all brothers and we also trust that the secretary general, regardless of the country of origin, will carry out his duties fully and will take care of the interests of all.

Unfortunately, instead of settling the issue by the brotherly means to which we have always resorted, it was wished to be resolved by means previously unfamiliar to the council.

In view of the fact that we, in the GCC, are equal as regards rights and duties under the provision of the member-states' statute, we have been relying on the provisions of that statute which stipulate that the Supreme Council's resolutions on objective matters [masa'il al-mawdu'iyyah] must be approved unanimously by the member states.

Undoubtedly, the appointment of the secretary general comes within the sphere of those matters. The principle of unanimity on objective matters has been established in the council's practices. There is the precedence of many resolutions which were not approved in previous summits due to the disapproval of one state.

This is the first time that that principle has been breached.

The State of Qatar nominated one of its sons for the post of secretary general over six months ago. We were told that the matter would be discussed at the next summit. Later, the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia nominated one of its citizens for the post.

I would have liked the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, aware that our nomination came first, to have asked us directly to concede in favor of its nominee. It would have been easy for us to respond favorably to a request by our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Relations among our states and people did not begin with the GCC. The roots of these relations have been firmly established since the days of fathers and forefathers, and their bases have always been affinity and amity, which we are all eager to continue and develop.

However, since, on the establishment of the GCC, we chose to adhere to a legal framework provided by the statute which was approved by the member-states, we must all abide by the provisions of that statute and not set a precedence for breaching them, because that would incontestably have repercussion on the progress of the council and its ability to achieve the aims for which it was established.

I would like to state that we have no objection to the nominee put forward by the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, our objection is focused on the extent of the lawfulness of the appointment considering the method followed, and the extent of the lawfulness of the resolution passed by the council regarding this matter, although we are confident that the resolutions adopted by our brothers were passed out of a sincere intention to serve our Gulf peoples.

We did not insist on a particular solution or a particular nominee. Therefore, it was within the right of any member-state to object to the Qatari nominee. It would have been possible to settle the matter by withdrawing the nominees and extending the term of the incumbent secretary general, by referring the issue of the application of the statute pertaining to voting to the dispute settlement authority in accordance with the statute, or by reaching agreement on any other fraternal solution deemed by the council.

However, we found out that there was a clear insistence on opposing that, which made us disagree so that this unhealthy phenomenon will not be repeated, and to reaffirm the bases and principles established by the council's statute and accepted by all the member-states as a procedure which they would abide by in their joint action, and cooperate among themselves within its framework.

I pray to God to guide us to the correct path, and help us to succeed in a way that will serve our brotherly countries and peoples. Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you. [end recording]

Qardawi Rejects Normalization With Israel

PCLH0012A Doha AL-RAYAH in Arabic 7 Oct 95 p 16

[Article by Hasan 'Ali Duba: "Dr. al-Qardawi in His First Friday Sermon of the Year: "Arabs and Muslims Must Boycott Israeli Goods and Oppose Normalization as the Egyptians Did"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his first Friday sermon in the 'Umar Ibn-al-Khattab Mosque, Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi mounted a fierce attack on the recent agreement between the Palestinians and Israel. He called for a boycott of Israeli goods, the rejection of normalization, and the adoption the Egyptian people as a model, for they rejected normalization in spite of the Camp David agreement. He said it was a stand that must be remembered, and which Arab and Islamic peoples must emulate. Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi said, "As our generation lives, it sees the predicament of Muslims in the east and in the west, in the north and the south; it sees the Muslims' miseries in the news and broadcasts. Our generation has lived to see the Muslims celebrating their humiliation, seeing humiliation as a victory and conquest, just as our generation has lived to see the Jews dominating the destiny of our nation, and the cause of Palestine, the greatest and most important cause of all, the land of prophets, the land of the Prophet Muhammad's journey to the seventh heaven, of the first *qiblah*, the land of the al-Aqsa Mosque blessed by God, the cause of Palestine, coming to this end we are witnessing: the Oslo agreement and the supplementary agreements. What did the Palestinians seek before, and still seek, in the era of disgrace? They used to say that all Israel was founded on aggression, on the usurpation and occupation of our land. Then after a time they said, our mission is to erase the effects of their aggression; that is, the aggression of 1967—keeping silent about the aggressions of 1956, 1948, and the aggressions prior to those. Even this they have not attained; they have not established a Palestinian state on this small piece of land given them as a gift by Israel. 'A Palestinian state?' said Rabin. 'There is no such thing as a Palestinian state—not even in half a century.' When Clinton was asked about this subject, it went in one ear and out the other. The Palestinian state for which the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded—for the people sought the establishment of their independent state on all of its national territory—where is it? Israel is the overseer; it even dominates in the Mosque of Abraham; they even have left a group of settlers to lord it over the Hebronites. Where are the refugees, estimated in the millions—where are their rights to return to their homeland? Where is Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine? Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine is gone. What Rabin said in Oslo has now come true: 'Jerusalem is the eternal and historical capital of Israel and of the people of Israel.' We have accepted all this, unfortunately; we are glad to have merely saved our skin. As the pre-Islamic poet Imru' al—Qays said, 'I have roamed the horizons until I was content merely to save my skin.' This, regrettably, is what has happened now. Israel wants to consume the whole PLO, to devour it economically, politically, and culturally. That is prepared for, and there is the GATT agreement helping Israel to get what it wants. There are those among the Arabs' great men who want to get rich, even by illicit means, who want to seek agencies from Israel and are rushing to fill their bank accounts with millions. That is not permissible for our nation. While the politicians weakened, and signed what they signed, we, the Arab and Islamic peoples, we must boycott; we have a duty to stand up as the Egyptian people stood up after the Camp David agreement. They rejected normalization, and they refused to break the psychological barrier. They refused to go to Israel when the door to tourism opened, and refused to buy Israeli goods. We must take remember this; this must be the stand of the Arab and Islamic peoples. They must boycott Israeli goods, and their boycott must continue. A policy cannot force a man to buy what he does not want. So it is up to us; this is our duty."

Then His Eminence commented on the sentence handed down against Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman in the United States. He said this was oppression; His Eminence said, "I have never met Shaykh 'Umar in my life; he is from the generation after mine. I have never heard a sermon of his or read an article of his; I am against violence, I don't want violence, and I don't want to spread Islam using violence, rather by using speech and good preaching, and by persuading minds. But we believe Shaykh 'Umar has been wronged. The American media has wronged him and blown his case out of proportion. They have gone overboard with the Muslims and linked Islam to terror. They have done what they have done in order to deliver this verdict on this blind shaykh, having no mercy on his old age, his blindness, or his illnesses. They delivered this verdict. We hope for the appeal which now seeks for the shaykh to receive justice. Games have been played, and there were people who interfered, such as the one who was working for the FBI, and embroiled the shaykh in all this, along with some of those with him. Today the newspaper AL-SHARQ quoted the shaykh as saying, 'The killing of innocent people is a sin; if people wish to fight, let them fight the U.S. Army.'"

"This does not mean they should go out and fight the army; only those who have what the U.S. Army has are able to fight it."

Saudi Arabia

Statement on King Fahd's Release From Hospital

LD0812102995 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
0832 GMT 8 Dec 95

[Statement issued by the Royal Court; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Statement from the Royal Court":

Under God's protection and care, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, may God look after him, left King Faysal specialized hospital in Riyadh the early morning hours of 8 December after recovering from the sudden indisposition he suffered and after completing necessary medical tests.

He, may God save him, will spend a period of rest and convalescence following the doctors' recommendation. We pray God to bless him with good health and vitality and to grant him help and success [as received]. He [God] is the only who listens and responds favorably [to prayers].

TV Cites UAE Official on Arab Solidarity

JN0712145295 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 6 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan, under secretary of the United Arab Emirates [UAE] Information Ministry, said that Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the UAE, is interested in achieving Arab solidarity by resolving all issues of concern to the Arab nation, including relations with Iraq.

In press statements during his visit to the Press Center at Muscat Intercontinental Hotel, Shaykh 'Abdallah added: This means that Iraq should cooperate with the Arab states to resolve the issue pertaining to Iraq's implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

Shaykh 'Abdallah Al Nuhayyan asserted that Iraq is an important element in the Arab entity, and that Arab solidarity cannot be achieved without Iraq. He pointed out that everyone is ready to stand with Iraq to implement the international resolutions.

He added: We should bring views closer between Iraq and the United Nations. He also reasserted that no one in the Gulf is against releasing the Kuwaiti POW's and other detainees if they are actually present in Iraq.

It is noteworthy that Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Zayid Al Nuhayyan is a member of his country's delegation to the Arab Gulf states meetings in Muscat which concluded today.

Cuban Official Concludes Meetings, Visit

Says Talks 'Very Good'

JN0712163095 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1520 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 7 Dec (INA)—Pedro Miret Prieto, Cuban Council of Ministers vice president and State Council member, expressed his profound admiration of leader President Saddam Husayn's character and his courage in confronting the suspect conspiratorial schemes.

In a statement to INA today, the Cuban official said that relations between Iraq and Cuba are distinguished and constructive despite the continuation of the unjust blockade against both friendly peoples.

He asserted that the results of his talks with Iraqi officials were very good and that they aimed to activate cooperation in the health and medical fields as a result of the continued unjust blockade which has adversely affected the health field in Iraq. He added that the talks also aimed to take effective measures to export medicines and doctors to Iraq and to activate other fields once the blockade is lifted.

Concluding his statement, Prieto said that his country supports Iraq's leadership and people. He expressed hope that the Iraqi people's suffering will end and that justice and peace will be achieved.

Signs Cooperation Minutes

JN0712201295 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and Cuba this evening signed minutes of joint cooperation at the conclusion of the work of the Iraqi- Cuban Joint Committee for Technical and Economic Cooperation.

The minutes were signed by Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir, head of the Iraqi side in the Committee, and by Pedro Miret Prieto, Cuban Council of Ministers vice president, State Council member, and head of the Cuban side in the Committee.

Khudayyir addressed the signing ceremony. He asserted that joint action between both friendly countries, Iraq and Cuba, stems from the solid relationship between them. He said: This relationship has strong bases laid by the two leaders, President Saddam Husayn and President Fidel Castro, to honestly express the interest of both friendly peoples.

He added: Our meeting today reaffirms that the difficult circumstances our two countries are experiencing will not prevent the continuation of cooperation, joint contacts, and aspiration for a bright future for our two peoples.

Afterward, Prieto delivered a speech. He said that signing the minutes of joint cooperation between our two countries confirms the serious desire to consolidate the joint historic relations. He added that what was reached in the joint cooperation issues is an important achievement for both friendly peoples.

Leaves Baghdad

JN0812105995 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1005 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Baghdad, 8 Dec (INA)—Pedro Miret Prieto, Cuban Council of Ministers vice president and State Council member, and his accompanying delegation left Baghdad today following a several-day visit to Iraq. [passage omitted]

Minister Meets Italian, French Communications Teams

JN0712164595 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video; from the "Evening Newspaper" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Transport and Telecommunications Minister Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad today met with a delegation from the Italian (Ilina) Company led by former Italian deputy (Dipetro). They discussed ways to promote cooperation between both friendly countries in the fields of transport and communications.

Dr. Ahmad also met today with a delegation from the French Company Alcatel led by (Adam), executive director of the company. They discussed bilateral cooperation in the communication sectors, the exchange of experience, the provision of spare parts, and the possibility of improving the performance of French-made telephone switchboards.

Two UN Guards Said Among 13 Killed in Truck Blast

NC0712125995 Paris AFP in English 1254 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 7 (AFP)—Thirteen people were killed including two UN guards when a tanker truck exploded at a petrol station in Kurdish-held northern Iraq on Thursday [7 December], the Iraqi opposition said.

Barzani Radio Reports Explosion

JN0712191895 (Çlandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At 0930 on 7 December, an explosion occurred at a gas station in the Darband Shaqlawah area. The cause of the explosion has not yet been determined. The explosion resulted in the martyrdom of 13 people, including four women and children, and two UN employees, who were passing through the area in their car at the moment of the explosion. Another UN employee and 13 citizens were also were wounded, five of whom are in serious condition. The regrettable incident also resulted in the destruction of a civilian car and the damaging of two UN cars, the gas station, and a number of houses and shops near the scene of the explosion.

The forces of [word indistinct] immediately rushed to the scene and the wounded were evacuated to the Shaqlawah hospital. The competent authorities were still investigating the incident when this report was prepared. [passages omitted]

Opposition: Minister Assassination Bid Foiled

MM0712170095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 7 Dec 95 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Opposition Has Information on Assassination Attempt on Interior Minister"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — A statement by the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] said that Iraqi Interior Minister Muhammad Zimam 'Abd-al-Razzaq escaped an assassination attempt carried out a few days ago in "a daring operation by groups affiliated to the Islamic resistance."

The statement received by AL-HAYAH explained that the attack was carried out when the minister's motorcade was on the road to the al-Zajiah area, some 5 km from the al-'Uzayr suburb in the al-'Imara area on the way to the al-Qurnah district. It said that the attack resulted in two military vehicles and a car belonging to the special security organs being destroyed.

In another statement, SAIRI (led by Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim) said that an Iraqi Army armored battalion supported by infantry troops has stormed the village of al-Nasr "after surrounding it and shelling it with heavy artillery." The statement added that the troops which stormed the village in al-Nasiriyah Governorate in southern Iraq "shot and killed three young people and arrested 14 others" in retaliation against the villagers who had blocked the main road for 2 km as a protest against the regime's policy of discriminating against southerners and depriving them of medicine and necessary services.

Regime Forces Said Harassing Marshland Inhabitants

NC0712172095 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The regime of the tyrant Saddam Husayn recently stepped up its drive to expel the inhabitants of the marshlands and other southern areas in the country in a desperate attempt to reassert its dwindling presence there.

According to reliable reports from the south, the regime recently began to use various terrorist methods to intimidate the citizens who still resist the government's repressive organs and cooperate with Islamic resistance factions.

The reports add that the regime has begun to shell residential areas with heavy artillery to force the citizens to flee their homes and inflict severe. Several villages in Al-'Amarah [Maysan] Governorate's al-Majarr al-Kabir district have been shelled by regime artillery, causing civilians casualties and forcing dozens of families to escape the area and look for other shelters.

The reports note that the tyrant Saddam's forces deployed in the marshlands and other southern areas, notably near the main road between al-Basrah and al-'Amarah.

The reports also say that the tyrant's forces are terrorizing and pursuing the inhabitants to force them to leave their villages so that the government can control them and limit Islamic resistance operations in the marshlands and other southern areas.

It should be noted that the Islamic resistance forces are continuing to deal painful blows to the regime's forces in many marshland and other southern areas. Despite the regime's attempt to restrain them, the resistance forces control most of these areas at night and carry out jihad operations against the tyrannical regime's offices and mercenaries.

More Than 20 PKK 'Terrorists' Said Killed

JN0712220195 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] More than 20 armed terrorists were killed in the three-hour clashes which erupted between the heroic peshmerga of Kurdistan and a group of the PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party] terrorists in three axes in the Nerva and (Rakan) areas on 6 December. The corpses of a number of these terrorists remained with our peshmerga and two PKK terrorists were captured. [passage omitted]

Our heroic peshmerga captured a number Kalashnikov rifles, [word indistinct], an RPG launcher, and a quantity of military ammunition and hardware.

Saddam Orders Ministers To Ensure Potable Water for Basra

JN0812105295 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 27 Nov 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad [INA] — Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, has ordered the Irrigation Minister Mahmud Dhiyab al-Ahmad to undertake the task of supervising the higher committee entrusted with implementing Wafa' al-Qa'id Canal project for transporting potable water from al-Ghiraf River in Dhi Qar Governorate to al-Basrah Governorate, and that he will be aided in this task by teams from the Ministries of Irrigation and Housing and Reconstruction.

His excellency has also ordered that Housing Minister Ma'n 'Abdallah Sarsam will undertake the task of supervising the higher committee entrusted with maintaining and increasing the efficiency of al-Basrah water projects and networks, which are currently being implemented by teams of the Ministries of Interior and Housing and Reconstruction.

Moreover, the leader president has ordered that the Ministries of Industry and Minerals, Transport and Communications, and Oil as well as the Military Industrialization Organization ensure the requirements of these two projects through coordination with the Ministries of Interior, Irrigation, and Housing and Reconstruction. His excellency has also ordered that the ministers of interior, irrigation, and housing and reconstruction will undertake the task of coordinating work among the quarters concerned and following up on the implementation of the leader president's orders.

Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve and protect him, had ordered during his chairmanship of the 39th cabinet session when discussing the question of following up on implementation of Wafa' al-Qa'id project, that there must be coordination and division of labor at the present phase among the ministers of interior, irrigation, and housing and reconstruction and that these ministers must carry out whatever decisions they reach and keep the cabinet informed on that.

Wafa' al-Qa'id project consists of transporting potable water through a 231-kilometer long canal from Bad'ah region in Dhi Qar Governorate to al-Basrah Governorate, lining up the canal, and reinforcing, maintaining, and increasing the efficiency of the water network in the City of Basra.

Peres 'Pleased' With Cairo Meeting With Mubarak

Ties, Syria Said Main Topics

TA0712172995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will visit Cairo next week, and President Mubarak will update him on what he heard today from Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister. The prime minister returned from Egypt a short while ago, pleased with the results of his meeting. Our correspondent Arye Gus came back with him:

[Gus] Peres was indeed happy, but let us start with the al-Asad visit. He was supposed to visit Cairo last week, but he canceled the visit for some reason. He will visit Cairo next week and, Peres told us, the Egyptian president promised to pass on things he heard from Peres.

The Syria issue was one of the main topics discussed today in Cairo. The first issue they discussed, which pleased Peres so much, was bilateral relations. Primarily, Peres said, he is pleased that two issues that were on the agenda and burdened the relations between the two countries, have been removed.

[Begin Peres recording] We had a good meeting. We struck off the agenda the two most controversial issues that stood between us. One is the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty]. We decided to put it off for at least another year, perhaps until after the peace agreement with Syria is signed. The other issue is the POW's. I told him that we intend to appoint a reserve major general who will look into what became of the POW's. [end recording]

[Gus] This general will probably be Reserve Major General Shlomo Lahat, who will examine the issue. He will not only look at issues pertaining to the killings of Egyptian POW's. In answer to my question, Peres said he will examine all POW affairs, meaning also the killings of Israeli POW's.

These two issues were struck off the agenda, which comes as a great relief to Israel, mainly because Mubarak agreed to stop Egyptian pressures on the NPT issue, and to put it off until after a peace agreement with Syria is signed, in one, two, or more years.

The prime minister went to Egypt to update Mubarak on his talks with King Husayn, on what he will talk to 'Arafat about tomorrow, and before he goes to Washington next week. Mubarak had little news to tell Peres, but he certainly expressed his support for the steps the prime minister will take. The prime minister said he is very pleased and optimistic with what he heard from Mubarak regarding Syria's view of the peace process.

The prime minister is currently working on a new idea, which he presented to Mubarak, and felt it was received well: A comprehensive Middle East peace signing ceremony. When the peace agreement with Syria is signed, peace agreements will be signed — at the same time and place — with some 18 or 20 Arab countries.

The two also discussed other, more minor issues such as the Egyptian reaction to the idea of an Israeli-U.S. defense pact, and 'Amr Musa's remarks on the security memorandum of understanding with Russia.

On the whole, Peres' first visit to Russia as prime minister was a pleasant one and scored handsome achievements.

POW Issue To Be Investigated

TA0712124195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will appoint a reserve major general to investigate the killing of Egyptian POW's, Peres promised President Mubarak in Cairo.

Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that the two decided to bolster cooperation between their two states, especially in the economic field.

The Egyptian president expressed the hope that the negotiations between Israel and Syria would be resumed as quickly as possible.

The prime minister will confer with Yasir 'Arafat tomorrow.

Peres To Seek Pollard Pardon in Clinton Talks

TA0712124895

[FBIS Editorial Report] The Israeli press on 7 December carries several reports on the topics Prime Minister Shim'on Peres plans to discuss with U.S. President Clinton during his upcoming visit to Washington.

Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew carries a front-page report by Nahum Barne'a and Shim'on Schiffer, stating: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has appealed to U.S. President Bill Clinton to pardon Jonathan Pollard, who had been convicted of spying for Israel and is serving a life term in prison.

"The appeal was communicated in a written message the prime minister yesterday sent to the U.S. President. The message will be relayed to the White House by Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich today. Peres' message states that Pollard has already served 10 years of his prison sentence, and that it is now up to President Clinton to decide whether he can be released."

The report adds: "Pollard's case will be raised during Peres' talks with Clinton at the beginning of next week in Washington."

Addressing the urgent need for U.S. aid funds, Judy Maltz writes on page A1 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ: "The Israeli current account deficit may be in excess of $5 billion this year if U.S. civilian aid is not received by the end of the month, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat warned at a Finance Ministry budget department meeting yesterday."

Maltz adds that the issue was discussed "during President Clinton's visit to Israel a month ago," and, according to Shohat, "Peres plans to raise the issue again during his visit to Washington next week."

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English states in a report by David Makovsky, Hillel Kuttler, and news agencies on pages 1 and 2: "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told King Husayn in Amman yesterday that, during his visit to Washington next week, he would again urge the US to provide military assistance to Jordan."

Peres To Insist on Integrated Early Warning System

TA0812085095 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 8 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Hayim Shibi in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres denied reports that Israel has dropped its demand for early warning stations on the Golan Heights, saying that it remains valid.

One of the issues the parties are focusing on prior to the upcoming meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Shim'on Peres is the package of early warning components that Israel will demand on the Golan Heights within the framework of an arrangement.

Israeli sources in Washington said that Israel is insisting on an "integrated" early warning system, which would receive intelligence data both from American and Israeli sources, as well as from air-based and ground-based systems.

"We would not want to be dependent on one system," a senior Israeli source explained.

Baraq: Not Ready To Make Golan Concessions

NC0712192295 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In remarks to MBC's Budapest correspondent Anis Abu-al-'Ula, Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has asserted that Israel is not ready at this time to make concessions to Syria in connection with the Golan Heights. He explained that it will become apparent next week if the Israeli-Syrian negotiations will be resumed or not.

[Begin recording] [Baraq, in English] It's too early to predict what will happen. I believe that within a few weeks after Prime Minister Peres' visit to Clinton and when we hear the Syrian response we will realize whether it's possible. We are ready to go in a very flexible way in terms of procedure and even to certain extents in terms of substance. We are thinking of real peace, the kind of peace that already exists between European countries and the kind and nature of peace, warm one, that we have with Jordan and we expect other Arabs to be ready to join if we are successful but we don't know yet whether the Syrians are ready to go on such an endeavor and we will know it within few weeks. I hope that they will be ready and we will open negotiations.

[Abu-al-'Ula, in English] It means, your excellency, that you are ready to make compromise about the Golan?

[Baraq, in English] No, it does not mean anything yet but it means that we are open mind, we understand it the same way that we expect the Syrians to listen carefully to our needs, we have obligation to listen very carefully to their perspective, to their interest, to their needs and trying to find a formula where full normalization and full openness of peace could be brought together with the security needs of both sides and the early warning needs of both sides and the kind of withdrawal that will be appropriate or congruent with this [word indistinct]. [end recording]

Baraq, Russia's Kozyrev Meet on Syria Talks

TA0712160495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Russia says it is ready to help the peace negotiations between Israel and Syria. According to Moscow's Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, it is also encouraging Yasir 'Arafat to take action against terror. Kozyrev was talking with his Israeli counterpart, Ehud Baraq, at a meeting in Budapest of the Organization for European Security and Cooperation.

Where Syria is concerned, Baraq said the nature of peace would have an impact on the security arrangements to be put in place on the Golan Heights. Israel wanted to expand the negotiations between the two countries and the manner in which they are being held, Baraq said.

Senior 'Elements' Note Change in al-Asad's Stand

TA0712135895 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 7

[Report by Hemi Shalev and Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "Both sides — Syria and Israel — are serious about making progress and achieving a peace agreement," said U.S. mediator Dennis Ross at the conclusion of one of his working meetings in Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

Senior Jerusalem elements said after their meeting with Ross: "The Syrian president changed his attitude toward the peace process after he became convinced that the Labor Party would win the next elections."

The elements said that Damascus was very impressed with the public opinion polls published after Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination, concluding that the Likud stood a very slim chance of winning the next elections. The elements said that, as a result, the Syrians are less afraid that a political turnabout in Israel will affect the implementation of the peace agreement, if signed.

The elements further reported that Israel and Syria have already agreed to a significant intensification in the U.S. "shuttle diplomacy." It is in this framework that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will apparently visit the region on 14 December, less than two days after Prime Minister Shim'on Peres returns from Washington.

The elements said the Syrians have agreed to expand the spectrum of issues to be negotiated by the two sides. In addition, the Syrians said that they agree in principle to hold high-level political encounters at which negotiations will be conducted, although they seem still to adhere to their previous stand linking such encounters with substantial progress in the negotiations.

Israel has pointed out to Ross that it may waive its demand for ground early warning stations on the Golan Heights, provided its other demands for security arrangements and normalization are met. A senior element involved in the contacts with the Americans said last night: "If thousands of Israeli tourists cross the Syrian border every day, we may not require a ground early warning station." [passage omitted]

[A report by Aluf Ben and 'Aqiva Eldar on pages A1 and A2 of Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 7 December adds: "If attacks continue to be carried out from Lebanon, Israel will find it hard to advance the peace negotiations with Syria. This observation was made yesterday by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in a meeting with U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross in Jerusalem. Peres brought up the problem of terrorism from Lebanon — namely, the katyushas fired at Israel last week — during his first meeting with Ross two days ago. Yesterday he reiterated his protest in the wake of the incidents in south Lebanon, in which a soldier was killed."]

Golan Movement Supporting Peace Process Announced

TA0712141895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A new movement has been set up in the Golan Heights claiming to be an alternative to the Golan Settlements Committee. [Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 7 December notes that the movement is called The Road to Peace (Haderekh Lashalom).]

Yig'al Kipnis, one of the movement's leaders, said in a news conference today: We would be prepared to come down from the Golan in peacetime and we have the support of at least half the inhabitants of the Golan.

[Begin Kipnis recording] There is no doubt that the assassination was the main impetus for our appearance now. We all knew it was a lie that one view represented all the inhabitants of the Golan, but other views were not heard for various reasons. I assume they would have surfaced at some point, but they probably cropped up now because of unexpected developments.

We have two main messages: One, backing the peace process, and two, providing a platform for a dialogue among the inhabitants, but especially between them and the policymakers. I think it is a breakthrough in that respect. What we need now is a policy of open negotiations and to leave it to the negotiating team — headed by the prime minister and the government — to play their cards close to their chest and get the best results they can. [end recording]

Settlers Form Association for Leaving Territories

TA0712155995 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 13

[Report by 'Ofer Petersburg and Eytan Glickman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Hundreds of families, many of them from Qiryat Arba', have formed an association for the purpose of leaving the territories in exchange for compensation.

The association, whose members come mainly from secular urban centers in the West Bank (hundreds from

Qiryat Arba', dozens of families from Qarney Shomron, and a large group from 'Imanu'el), is backed by Peace Now.

Several rallies have been organized throughout the country to persuade other settlers to join the initiative. Financed by Peace Now, a rally held recently in Qarney Shomron was attended by Alex Goldfarb, the deputy housing and construction minister, and 30 local families.

The formula worked out by Peace Now would offer compensation to apartment owners based on the cost of their apartment linked to the housing price index or, conversely, a similar sized apartment within the Green Line.

According to a recent public opinion poll conducted by Modi'in Ezrahi, 40 percent of the residents of Judaea and Samaria would be prepared to move out — 33 percent gave a categorically affirmative answer, while 7 percent gave an hesitant answer. The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza claims that the numbers are much lower.

Dayan: 40 Settlements To Be Relocated in Blocs

TA0812125495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan said that within the framework of the permanent arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians, approximately 40 Jewish settlements would be relocated within settlement blocs. On no account would Israeli settlements remain under Palestinian rule, the deputy foreign minister said. Eli Dayan was speaking to Labor Party activists at Kibbutz Sedot Yam.

Soldiers Attacked With Grenades in Nabulus

TA0712162195 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 11

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday, on the eve of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] evacuation, attempts to injure Israeli soldiers continued. A homemade grenade was thrown at an IDF patrol on the outskirts of the Nablus casbah. There were no casualties, but their vehicle was slightly damaged.

The soldiers returned fire at their assailants and set off after them into the casbah, whereupon two gas grenades were hurled at them. Later, when officers arrived on the scene to debrief the soldiers, another gas grenade was thrown at them. Sources in Nabulus believe that the attack was staged by Fatah members hiding in the casbah. [passage omitted]

1,000 Palestinian Prisoners To Be Freed

TA0712163395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 7

[Report by Barukh Me'iri]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some 1,000 Palestinian prisoners will be freed this month. This was the conclusion at yesterday's discussions by the ministerial committee on Palestinian prisoners' release which held its first meeting yesterday. According to the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, Israel is to free all the Palestinian prisoners in three stages.

The first stage was carried out after the signing of the interim agreement; the second stage will take place shortly before the Palestinian elections; and the third, upon signing the permanent agreement.

According to predetermined criteria, prisoners who have been convicted of murder or inflicting severe bodily damage will not be released this time, unless they have served at least two-thirds of their sentences.

Some 4,000 Palestinian prisoners are currently being held in Israeli prisons and detention facilities.

PA's International Telephone Connection Restored

TA0812072095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bezeq yesterday restored the international telephone connection for the Palestinian Authority [PA] after the Palestinians transferred 50 million shekels in partial settlement of their outstanding account. Bezeq Director Yitzhaq Kaul told Qol Yisra'el the decision was made after the PA undertook to make every effort to reach a new agreement with Bezeq.

Police Close PA Office Operating in Jerusalem

TA0812074795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jerusalem Police Minorities Division questioned East Jerusalem resident Sayyid Sabri in connection with illegally opening and operating a branch of the Palestinian Authority [PA]. The suspect admitted he is active in the PA and promised to close the East Jerusalem office within a week.

Hizballah, Other 'Terrorist' Groups Said Collaborating

TA0712130695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p A2

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Major General Beni Lidor, head of the Northern Command staff, yesterday conducted an initial investigation into the day's events in south Lebanon, together with other Northern Command officers, including Major General 'Amiram Levin, the Northern Command chief. According to Lidor, all the south Lebanese terrorist elements are collaborating against the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the SLA [South Lebanese Army].

Lidor pointed out that the understandings achieved in the wake of Operation Accountability were again violated yesterday. "Yesterday we saw the terrorists emerge from the outskirts of the village of Qabriha and fire artillery from the edges of villages and of al-Nabatiyah," he said, "which only shows how seriously they observe the understandings."

Northern Command sources say Hizballah is collaborating with Amal and other Palestinian organizations. Hizballah's strength has grown over the past year thanks to arduous training and modern weapons. A General Staff source said that "this is an army in every sense, with proper commanders and units, which makes orderly sorties and has even learned not to leave its wounded behind. The organization is acting with the clear knowledge that its familiarity with the terrain is superior to that of the IDF." [passage omitted]

[A related item by Eytan Rabin on the same page adds that in yesterday's hostilities in south Lebanon, a paratrooper was killed and "six were wounded slightly and moderately. The six are a battalion commander, a company commander, and four soldiers." Rabin adds that "according to a senior Northern Command officer, the clash was with Amal men."]

Dayan: Airspace Accord With Saudi Arabia 'Soon'

TA0812085695 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan says that flights destined for Israel will soon be able to fly over Saudi Arabia. He told UN Deputy Secretary Nafis Sadiq of Pakistan that Israel and Saudi Arabia will soon be signing a cooperative airspace agreement.

Integrated Antiaircraft System Built With Romania

TA0712192195 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 6

[FBIS Translated Text] The presentation of an antiaircraft system integrating components manufactured by REFA'EL (Armament Development Authority) and Romania was recently made before the top echelon of the Romanian Army as part of the cooperation between REFA'EL, the Romanian Defense Ministry, and a military plant in Romania.

The integrated system consists of a patrol car manufactured by REFA'EL (a Sufa jeep outfitted with a Stalker target-homing device) and four Strella missiles produced by the Romanian plant, which originally were shoulder-launched short-range personal antiaircraft missiles.

The integrated system can home in on airborne targets and engage them both in daylight and at night.

Five missiles were fired in the course of the presentation last September, and all of them hit their targets.

The wide use of Strella missiles in Eastern Europe creates a potentially big market for the upgrades offered by REFA'EL, which basically provides night operational capabilities.

Goldfarb Quits Coalition; Knesset Tied 60-60

TA0712160595 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p 19

[Report by Menahem Rahat]

[FBIS Translated Text] Knesset Member [MK] Alex Goldfarb — who first split from Tzomet, then from YI'UD [Independent and Democratic Israel], and recently from his new faction 'Atid [Future], which he set up with MK Ester Salmovich who is about to join the Likud — last night announced he is splitting again, this time from the coalition.

Goldfarb, deputy construction and housing minister, notified Labor yesterday that he no longer considers himself a member of the coalition. This statement has placed the number of coalition-supporting MK's at 60.

Goldfarb told the heads of the coalition that, since 'Atid has never signed a coalition agreement with Labor, he is not committed to it until one is signed. In response, Labor set up a team to negotiate with him, made up of Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili and MK Rafi Elul.

Goldfarb noted last night that he is abandoning the coalition, but is not joining the opposition and, at this stage, he considers himself as belonging to a new Knesset camp — the nonaligned. He said: "There are three Knesset camps: coalition, opposition, and independent — which is me."

Degel Hatora Launches Campaign Against 'Amital

TA0712191295 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 7 Dec 95 p A6

[Report by Shahar Ilan]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Degel Hatora [a component of United Torah Jewry] has launched an acerbic campaign against Minister Without Portfolio Yehuda 'Amital. Knesset Member Moshe Gafni, director general of Degel Hatora, told HA'ARETZ that 'Amital was "a low-level Jew with a ghetto mentality, who grovels before the gentile squire and is being used as a fig leaf." YATED NE'EMAN, Degel Hatora's mouthpiece, published a series of scathing attacks on 'Amital this week. One of them said that 'Amital will ultimately "be shamefully cast off by his partners, as all sycophants are." [passage omitted]

The attacks against 'Amital in Rabbi Schach's mouthpiece resemble those against SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]. In its editorial last Friday the paper wrote that it is hard to tell what Rabbi 'Amital's motives are: "obsequiousness or frustration, stupidity or a plain thirst for revenge."

According to the paper, "the leftist regime has for a long time tried to shake off the label of ravager of religion by incorporating a religious party. However, no religious party was prepared to provide a skullcap to the heretic government, until Rabbi 'Amital came forth to deliver the goods." [passage omitted]

Rabbi 'Amital would not comment on these developments.

Current Account Deficit Registers 6.4% Rise

TA0812113995 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 8 Dec 95 p 15

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The current account deficit grew by 6.4 percent over the first three quarters of the year compared with the same period in 1994, according to figures released yesterday by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The gap, measured as the difference between exports and imports of goods and services, as well as unilateral transfers, also includes defense-related imports worth $900m., a decline of $400m. from 1994.

As of September 30, Israel's foreign debt reached $18.5b.

Total exports of goods and services reached $21b., an increase of $3.4b. over last year, which was offset by an even larger growth in imports, which swelled by $3.8b. to $28.6b. [passage omitted]

Third-Quarter Foreign Investment 'Highest Ever'

TA0812114395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 8 Dec 95 p 11

[Report by Yosi Grinstein]

[FBIS Translated Text] The total investment in Israel between January and September stood at $1.35 billion, three times the amount invested in the same period last year. It was the highest ever foreign investment, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced. During the same period last year, total investments in Israel stood at $441 million, while in 1993 they were $304 million. In the third quarter of 1995, investments grew 2.2 times, reaching $361 million, compared with $165 million in the same quarter last year.

The government's foreign debt grew by $600 million between January and September, down from $1.5 billion last year. The banks' foreign debt rose to $1 billion, up from $800,000 last year. The Bank of Israel's assets grew by $1.5 billion, versus a $1.1 billion drop [in 1994]. The banks reduced their foreign holdings by $1 billion, after a $1.9 billion rise last year.

Iraq-Bound 'Advanced Military Equipment' Seized

NC0712161595 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jordanian authorities have seized a shipment of advanced military equipment bound for Iraq in violation of UN sanctions against the Baghdad regime, senior diplomatic sources in Amman stated today.

They said the equipment is associated with missile-guidance systems. This is an indication that Saddam's regime probably is continuing its work to produce medium-range missiles which the regime is no longer allowed to possess.

In an interview with REUTER, the diplomatic sources said the Jordanian authorities seized the military equipment at Amman Airport in November after a tip-off from U.S. intelligence. They added that the shipment had been at the airport for a month or longer because of slow customs procedures in Jordan.

The sources said the Jordanian authorities promptly seized the military equipment, an indication of Jordan's firm stand on the Saddam regime. The sources refused to reveal the origin of the very advanced equipment.

A source said Jordan's King Husayn was angry when he was told that banned equipment is still being smuggled for Saddam Husayn through his country.

Russian-Made Missile Guidance Systems

MM0812103595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 8 Dec 95 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Missile Equipment Bound for Iraq Seized at Amman Airport"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Sources close to Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN Commission entrusted with eliminating banned Iraqi weapons, have confirmed that the Jordanian authorities have seized a shipment of advanced military equipment bound for Iraq in violation of the international embargo imposed on that country.

The sources told AL-HAYAH that the shipment, which was seized at Amman Airport two weeks ago, consists of Russian-made missile guidance systems. They said that the shipment is enough to prepare 100 medium-range missiles of the type Iraq is banned from acquiring.

The sources denied that the equipment was seized after a tip-off from U.S. intelligence, stressing that it was Jordanian security organs that discovered the equipment at Amman Airport.

The sources added that the person assigned to ship this equipment to Iraq left Jordan days before it was seized. The sources did not specify his identity.

The Western diplomatic sources close to Ekeus said that the shipment is a clear violation of the embargo, which includes most Iraqi imports since the invasion of Kuwait over five years ago.

Husayn Kamil Said Allowed To Open Media Offices

JN0712160895 Abu Dhabi AL-ITTIHAD in Arabic 4 Dec 95 p 35

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Istanbul — Amman — AL-ITTIHAD and news agencies — Jordan is working hard to convince Turkey to allow the Constitutional Monarchy Party under al-Sharif 'Ali Bin-al-Husayn, a member of the Hashemite clan, to open a representation office. Al-Sharif 'Ali is one of the proposed alternatives for ruling Iraq. Meanwhile, an opposition Iraqi group announced in a statement that its leader, Dr. Nabil al-Janabi, met with Jordan's King Husayn, who stressed the importance of change in Iraq and saving its people "after human rights violations in it became intolerable."

The statement says that during the meeting, it was agreed to hold an expanded meeting of the Iraqi opposition in Amman within a maximum of three weeks to emerge with decisive decisions on change.

The statement stresses that King Husayn said that what is intended by reconciliation among the various sects in Iraq is to draft a permanent constitution that achieves reconciliation and justice, rather than to set up states for those sects.

The statement adds that King Husayn stressed the need to maintain Iraq's geographic unity and not to undermine it under any justification.

AL-ITTIHAD learned that the Jordanian Government agreed to open media offices for General Husayn Kamil Hasan in Amman. Those offices are supposed to be run by Sabah Salman, President Saddam Husayn's former press secretary. [passage omitted]

Government To Close Union Offices in West Bank

TA0812080495 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 6 Dec 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — Informed sources in the Prime Ministry's bureau of legislation disclosed that the Jordanian Government has recently formulated an amended draft law for trade unions which forbids them from engaging in political activity.

The sources added that after the House of Representatives approves the new draft law, the government intends to close all trade union offices in the West Bank.

It is worth noting that the Jordanian Government, represented by the Ministry of Justice, objected to the participation of West Bank lawyers and doctors in the last elections of the Jordanian lawyers' and doctors' unions under the pretext that the legal and administrative disengagement between Jordan and the West Bank forbids them from doing so. The two unions, however, insisted on this, and their West Bank members eventually participated in the elections.

Foiled Bombing, Assassination Plan Detailed

NC0712125895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1155 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 7 Dec (MENA)—According to Lebanese security reports from Tripoli in northern Lebanon, the Lebanese security services have foiled a terrorist plan by a fundamentalist Islamic group to assassinate several religious and political figures in the city and bomb some installations, tourist resorts, and commercial stores. The attacks were scheduled to take place shortly before the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

According to the reports, this is the first time that a salafi [ancestor-oriented] group has been uncovered in Lebanon.

The reports said that a traffic accident between an unidentified car and a truck parked near the Al-Jinan University in Tripoli's al- Zaytun neighborhood led to the discovery of dynamite sticks, Israeli-made weapons, gun silencers, maps of the places the group planned to bomb, a list of personalities the group wanted to assassinate, and written statements that were going to be issued after the assassinations and bombings had been carried out.

The reports said that the Lebanese and Syrian security services arrested the owner of the car and three other persons. They confessed that they were planning to clear the city of the devil's filth, as they put it. Investigauons have shown that the terrorist group belongs to a fundamentalist Islamic movement. It members previously belonged to the Islamic Unification Movement but later joined a religious salafi movement.

Israeli Bombardment Reported; Device Explodes

NC0812093695 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 12 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Lebanese Army conscript Joseph Riyashi was injured this morning during the shelling of al-Luwayzah in Iqlim al-Tuffah.

The Israeli occupation forces artillery bombarded the outskirts of Zibqin, Majdal Zun, and Jibal al-Butum in the western sector from their positions in Tayr Harfa this morning.

The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Jazzin reported that an explosive device went off at 0730 today near a Lahd [South Lebanese Army] agent on the Kurum al-Arz-Jazzin road, killing him.

At 0800 today, the occupation forces raked the areas between Surayri, al-Qatranah, and Khallat Khazin. Helicopters, machine guns, and field artillery were involved and the bombardment lasted until 0930. The occupation forces also shelled the hills of Jabbur, Abu Rashid, and Maydun in the western al-Biqa' with 155-mm artillery. Around 55 shells were fired, which caused only material damage.

Papers Note 'Positive Results' of Ross Tour

JN0812094795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 8 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Peace Means Rights and Obligations," AL-THAWRAH says: Syria has repeatedly said that peace means rights and obligations. Rights must be fully restored without any relinquishment. There should be a commitment to peace and security by all parties provided the security of one party is not achieved at the expense of another. If Israel truly wants peace and is serious about it, then it must respond to international resolutions and deal positively with the principles of peace.

AL-THAWRAH points out that the peace process has remained dormant due to Israel's refusal to respond to international calls and to the foundations of a true peace, despite all the initiatives and facilities provided by Syria to allow the peace process to take off. Syria did this in response to international calls and to facilitate the mission of U.S. envoys. Thus, Israel alone is responsible for the stalemate in the peace process, since it rejects a just and comprehensive peace and does not want to comply with the requirements for peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: It is common knowledge that Syria will not bargain over principles. If principles are relinquished, rights will be lost. Syria is not one of those that relinquish their territory and rights.

The paper concludes: The peace Syria wants is indivisible. This peace is based on international legitimacy and full Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines, without leaving behind any trace of the occupation in any form or under whatever name.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH comments on the tour of Dennis Ross, U.S. special coordinator for the peace process, in a bid to advance the peace process on the Syrian track. All signs indicate that the tour has achieved positive results. This is reflected in the statements of the U.S. envoy. Ross said that the parties are serious about peace, although he did not give any details on the ideas and proposals he heard from Israel to break the deadlock. Ross did not say if these proposals are compatible with international legitimacy and the Madrid frame of reference, which is the basis of a just and comprehensive settlement.

The newspaper says Israel's fierce war against Lebanon and its scorched-earth policy against southern Lebanon are not positive signals. These policies belie all the statements of the Peres government officials about the importance of peace. Thus, these statements are nothing more than maneuvers, deception, and evasion. Israel's policy toward Lebanon is an act of aggression that conflicts with the requirements for peace. The one who truly wants peace knows the road to it, and knows that the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy is the way to achieve it.

In its commentary today, AL-BA'TH says Israel is responsible for the stalemate in the peace talks. This is because Israel has refused to respond to the conditions for a just and comprehensive peace.

AL-BA'TH emphasizes the need for Israel to respond to the requirements of real peace so the peace process can proceed in the right direction. The paper notes the talks held by U.S. coordinator Dennis Ross in the region. Some political and media quarters sounded upbeat about the possibility of resuming the peace talks on the Syrian track and the possibility of making some progress that could advance this track. This optimism depends on any positive development in the Israeli stance toward the peace process. This requires a very clear Israeli stance toward the peace process, specifically with regard to withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. This condition remains the basis of any possible progress in the peace process. Without it, optimism will only be talk or a cover-up for certain matters.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Syria has clearly and specifically defined its position on the peace process. Syria wants full withdrawal in return for full peace. Israel, however, has to date not done anything that could help the peace process move a single step forward. Words alone do not achieve peace or return usurped land to its rightful owners. The peace process requires that Israel take practical positions. These can be summed up in full withdrawal from our occupied land to the 4 June 1967 lines and the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy, which make up the real foundation for a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

Dailies: Turn Peres' Statements Into 'Deeds'

JN0712181395 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In today's editorial entitled "Peres Statements Are Put to the Test," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The tour by Dennis Ross, U.S. coordinator of the peace process in the region, comes after this process entered a long stage of stalemate and dormancy and following new circumstances and developments. Perhaps the most prominent of these developments is Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination by Zionist terrorist Yig'al Amir. AL-BA'TH adds: A matter that was revealed after Rabin's assassination and was hinted at by some Israeli officials this time is that Rabin was behind the stalemate and deadlock in the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Furthermore, Shim'on Peres, Rabin's foreign minister at the time who succeeded him as Israeli Prime Minister, was not aware of the details of the contacts and talks which were held on these two tracks. Yitzhaq Rabin used to hide from his foreign minister the contents of the file on both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

AL-BA'TH notes that Shim'on Peres showed a desire to activate the peace process on the Syrian track after he was delegated to become Israel's prime minister. After Peres became prime minister, other Israeli officials made statements, all of which focus on pushing forward the peace process on the Syrian track and deal with the strategic importance of peace with Syria. AL-BA'TH adds that those officials are fully convinced that peace cannot be achieved in the region without Syria. Even after he met with Dennis Ross who came from Damascus, Peres said that peace with all Arab countries in the region hinges on Syria.

AL-BA'TH believes that if Peres' desire and that of his government are actually serious, and if they have a really true conviction that peace cannot be achieved in the region without Syria and that what happened so far with the others does not lead to a lasting peace unless it is achieved on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, then Peres's government should prove this with deeds, not with words only. It should also prove this through a frank and open commitment to its readiness to accept the bases of the peace process and move toward implementing them.

AL-BA'TH says: Syria was sincere toward the peace process in accordance with the bases on which it was launched since the beginning. It continues to provide one opportunity after another to ensure the success of this process. In return, the people so far have not heard anything from the Peres government and his staff other than general statements and hints mixed with many remarks that are contradictory sometimes and that bring back the obstacles of the past at other times.

AL-BA'TH believes that the peace process on the Syrian track cannot be launched with this hesitation, ambiguity, and contradiction. Besides, this track cannot move except according to the basis on which the peace process is based. Peres knows this very well. Therefore, whatever practical and tangible steps that ought to be taken to activate this track are confined to the Israeli side; that is, no other than the Peres government, which should prove its seriousness regarding the desire its showed toward activating the peace process on the Syrian track. Or else, the statements made by Israeli officials will be nothing more than desires and wishes thrown up in the air.

In a commentary entitled: "The Peace Opportunity and its Requirements," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Observers who are following the peace process with much optimism are talking about the available chance to achieve tangible progress on the Syrian-Israeli track and the Lebanese-Israeli track. AL-THAWRAH adds: These observers base their optimism on a group of facts. The first of these facts is the United States' iteration of its commitment to seriously work toward activating the peace process and rescuing its from the serious state of dormancy that afflicted it. The second of these facts is the new platform adopted by the Peres government since the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin.

AL-THAWRAH says: Before all this, observers realize that Syria's serious work toward achieving a just and comprehensive peace is no longer a subject for doubt and that Syria was never an obstacle to any real progress in the peace process. It did not maneuver or evade. Indeed, it sincerely voiced its word and announced its decision clearly. Syria said that peace is its strategic choice and that its efforts to achieve this peace are in line with the will of international legitimacy.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Now that Israel is changing its platform and that officials in it are talking about a real chance to activate the Syrian track and to move forward on the road to a just and comprehensive peace, the opportunity is available to make progress if Israel is sincere about its new proposals and if it commits itself to translating its words into deeds and offers whatever is needed to remove the doubts which have shrouded the Israeli stand throughout the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Progress in the peace process is contingent upon what Israel will offer and its compliance with the bases of progress and with the requirements of achieving a just and comprehensive peace that ensures the full restoration of territories and rights to their owners and achieves security and stability in the region.

In today's editorial entitled: "The Desired Peace," TISHRIN says: It is clear to people from near and far that Syria is the pivot of the process of achieving a just and comprehensive peace and that Syria's role will remain a central one in terms of pushing forward the peace process. The paper adds that the success of the peace process requires both parties' efforts. Syria stressed its adherence to the basis of a real, just, and comprehensive peace. The ball now is in the Israeli court. This confirms that Israel should stop making ambiguous statements and should stop showing contradictory signs in terms of achieving a just peace with Syria.

TISHRIN believes that the road to peace is not impossible and that it cannot go through winding paths that would negatively affect the desired objective of this road. This is because the peace process requires courage, clarity, and credibility as well as a full commitment on Israel's part to the will of right and justice — the will of ending the occupation and achieving withdrawal. The paper says that it is only through this that the peace process can achieve its objective. This was stressed by the formula of the Madrid conference and called for by the U.S. initiative.

TISHRIN concludes its editorial by saying: The ball continues to be in the Israeli court. Will the Israelis manage to overcome this challenge through a new stand that responds to the bases and requirements of peace? Moreover, will Israel benefit from the newly available chances to achieve a just and comprehensive peace?

Talas Speaks of Peace at Military College Ceremony

JN0712185095 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Under the patronage of comrade struggler President Hafiz al-Asad, secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th party and commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, the Political-Military College today celebrated the graduation of new class of its officers. Comrade Lieutenant General Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief, deputy prime minister, and defense minister represented the comrade commander in chief in patronizing this ceremony. The ceremony was attended by comrades Lieutenant General 'Ali Aslan and Lieutenant General Hasan Turkmani, deputies chief of staff; a number of senior General Command and field officers; and Staff Brigadier General Muhammad Tariq al- Khadra', chief of staff of the Palestine Liberation Army. It was also attended by a number of the brotherly Lebanese Army senior officers, directors of military colleges and institutes, and Syrian Armed Forces political guidance officers. [passage omitted]

In an address at the ceremony, Lt. Gen. Mustafa Talas, representative of the commander in chief, said: I am proud and honored to deputize for comrade struggler President Hafiz al-Asad, commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces, in patronizing this graduation ceremony of a new class of political guidance officers in our Armed Forces. It is a pleasure to convey to you the greetings of the leader of the victorious march and the pioneer of our pan- Arab struggle, comrade struggler Hafiz al-Aasd, who wishes you success in performing the noble tasks assigned to you as leaders and political guidance officers. [passage omitted]

In his address, Lt. Gen. Mustafa Talas spoke about the peace process in the region. He explained the required basic conditions for the establishment of a just, comprehensive peace in the region, a peace that must be based on the UN resolutions providing for ending the occupation of others' territories and returning rights to their rightful owners.

The commander in chief's representative said that Syria rejected all the concepts that are not based on the idea of a just, comprehensive peace. He said Syria will not bargain over rights and will not relinquish one inch of the occupied Arab territories. He said that there can be no advancement toward a just peace without full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. He then addressed greetings to the brotherly Lebanese army.

Concluding his address, Lt. Gen. Mustafa Talas thanked the political directorate and political college and its officers and trainers, and lecturers for their efforts to prepare this class of political guidance officers. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Sources: Taleban Retreat Due to Commander's Death

BK0712134495 Hong Kong AFP in English 1329 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Dec 7 (AFP) — Afghan sources on Thursday [7 December] said the Islamic militia's retreat from bases southeast of Kabul was caused by the death of a top Taleban commander in a bomb attack last week.

Abdul Qayyum, known as Mulla Mashar, was killed on November 27 after a jet apparently belonging to President Borhanoddin Rabbani dropped a cluster bomb on his Pul-i-Charkhi base, the mojahedin run Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said.

His death had so far been kept secret, it said.

A Taleban official in Pakistan, confirming the report, said the religious militia abandoned several posts after Mashar's death.

Mashar, 45, was the main Taleban commander in the southeast and had guided the militia's advance after its assault on the Afghan capital on October 11, the news agency said.

Under his commend the Taleban reportedly overran several military posts in a 20-kilometer (12-mile) area outside Kabul last month.

AIP said he was defending the strategic Pul-i-Charkhi base in the disused prison, 15 kilometers (nine miles) southeast of Kabul when pro-Rabbani forces in a counter offensive bombed Taleban positions.

In the confusion after Mashar's death, the Taleban troops lost some 20 kilometers (12 miles) of captured territory to Rabbani forces, it said.

Taleban sources told AFP that the militias held an important meeting in their headquarters in the southwestern Afghan city of Qandahar.

The Taleban militia is composed of students from religious schools in Pakistan and southwestern Afghanistan and was formed last year to replace Rabbani's government.

Unity Party Opens First Military Training Center

LD0712125095 Tehran IRNA in English 0837 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 7, IRNA — The first military training center of the Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan [Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan] was inaugurated in western Kabul Wednesday [6 December] simultaneously with the auspicious birthday of Imam 'Ali (a.s. [alayha salam, peace be upon him]), the first imam of the holy household of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh [peace be upon him]).

During the ceremony, head of the party's Central Council Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Akbari called on the staff and officers of the center to acquire the required traning in order to defend their homeland against the enemies. Pointing to the wars in the early days of Islam, Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbari called on Afghan mojahedin to follow the way of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) and Imam 'Ali (a.s.) and not let the enemies of Islam to achieve their vicious objectives in Afghanistan.

During the ceremony, head of the Military Commiittee of the Islamic Unity Party Seyed Mostafa Kazemi told IRNA here that 60 high-ranking officers have undertaken military training in the center. He said the main objective of the center is to train the regular experienced personnel to form military units, adding that military forces of the Islamic Unity Party are playing active role in many military activities and are stationed in six security zones in Kabul and its suburbs.

Opposition Groups Reject Rabbani Contact Group Plan

LD0812093095 Tehran IRNA in English 0812 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 8, IRNA — A number of Afghan opposition groups have rejected the proposal put forward by Afghan president, Borhanoddin Rabbani, on formation of a contact group on Afghanistan.

An informed source close to the Golboddin Hekmatyar led Hezb-e Eslami (Islamic Party) rejected the proposal on Thursday [7 December] describing it as an excuse by the president to continue to remain in office.

The government instead of moving up with different proposals should prepare the ground for installation of a government acceptable to all of the warring sides, added the source.

According to the source, President Rabbani's resignation is the only way to put an end to the crisis in this war-torn country.

Resignation of Rabbani will restore peace and stability to the country, said the source adding that the move would mean respecting the rights of the jihadi groups in the country.

The Taleban militia, who have laid siege on southern Kabul, also rejected the proposal calling it a "trick".

Taleban claims that international organizations do not have enough knowledge on realities and developments in Afghanistan, therefore, they cannot play an effective role in settling the crisis in the country.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry recently in a proposal requested U.N. secretary general, Butrus Butrus-Ghali, to form an international contact group on Afghanistan.

According to the proposal, representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and European Community in a contact group will assist the U.N. special envoy on Afghanistan, Mahmud Mistiri, in bringing an end to the crisis in this country.

Pakistan's Designs, Taleban Intentions Viewed

96LH0023A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 15 Sep 95 p 15

[Article by Rahimullah Afridi]]

[FBIS Translated Text] Peshawar—Once again, the military equations in the Afghani arena have been altered. The Taleban are achieving victories and threatening Kabul and President Rabbani's regime. An old-new question arises: On whose behalf are the Islamic law students acting; who is driving them? What if the Pakistanis are aiming to place King Zaher Shah back in power after the Taleban liquidate the armed, Afghani, fundamentalist movements?!

Developments in Afghanistan are accelerating like a desert sand storm. Until a few weeks ago, no one expected the defeat of the presidential forces at even a small post, let alone a strike against the most important governmental stronghold after Kabul. This perception had been bolstered by the successive victories of the presidential forces in southwest Afghanistan. However, in the space of only two days, governmental forces withdrew hundreds of kilometers from their positions in the face of the so-called "pious students," the Islamic law students, who captured Herat, the second most important city as far as the government is concerned after the capital, which has come under the fire and threat of the Taleban.

Reshuffling of the Deck

Despite the defeats suffered by the Afghani Government at the hands of Taleban and opposition forces, many leading opposition figures are not confident that time is on their side. They believe that nothing can be predicted based on current developments, because the Taleban, who now control half the Afghani territory, lack organization, coordination, administration, an experienced leadership, a political outlook, and the expertise of politicians and statesmen. The view of these figures is that the Taleban draws in members for the sake of what they call uprooting corruption, sinfulness, and lawlessness from the country; when the battles are over and the adversary is finished, their role will be also be finished, and a third force will jump into power. In other words, the Taleban are being manipulated, and their plans and decisions are being made by others.

It seems that the international and regional parties supporting the Taleban, chief among which is Pakistan, do not at this time wish to reveal the detailed plan that they are preparing for the post-Rabbani/Taleban stage. If the movement's members were aware of this plan (e.g. the return of Zahir Shah), they would not be fighting with their current zeal and would have already abandoned the movement and military activity. However, a political observer looking at this situation warns of the Taleban becoming a sweeping flood. He states that it will be difficult to control the Taleban if they gain military control over all of Afghanistan. If this happens, they will listen to no one. The rule of President Rabbani and his strongman, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, offer an apt analogy: Islamabad was damaged greatly by the relations that Rabbani and Mas'ud developed with India, Pakistan's traditional enemy. These relations were at the expense of the national security of Pakistan, which hosted millions of Afghani immigrants and was subjected to Russian and Afghani communist raids during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989.

A veteran Arab diplomat who closely monitors Afghani and Pakistani affairs stated, in an interview with AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, that Pakistan's attitude changed after Afghani governmental fighters carried out air raids against Pakistani areas bordering Afghanistan, causing extensive property damage. The Arab diplomat added that these raids were preceded by Pakistani displeasure with the development of an Indian-Afghani axis opposed to Islamabad, which cannot be lax regarding Indian threats to its national security.

Afghanistan watchers expect that the Taleban are a Trojan Horse paving the way for others. According to a high-level official in the UN mission in Islamabad, who prefers to remain anonymous, the Taleban will be in a real predicament when they capture Kabul. This official told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI that the Taleban cannot manage an ethnically diverse state. They will thus change their country and collaborate with others, losing their luster with the Afghani people when they embrace the practices of those with whom they are collaborating. Some believe that foreign parties are perhaps pushing the Taleban to collaborate with the leader of the Uzbeki militias, Abdol Rashid Dostam, to pave the way for the return of the Afghani king, Mohammad Zahir

Shah, which would cause serious splits within the ranks of the Taleban. In this regard, the movement's information official, Ma'sum Afghani, told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, "We will not accept the return of King Zahir Shah. We will form a government with those who leave their parties and join the movement. We reject political pluralism in an Islamic caliphate system."

Regarding the imminent return to Qandahar of the royal envoy, Commander in Chief Abdol Wali Khan, he said, "We do not object to the entry of a disbeliever or Muslim into Qandahar. However, we will not permit Commander in Chief Abdol Wali to engage in political activities in the city."

A political analyst believes that the Taleban movement was established with the intent of expelling the fundamentalist parties from the Afghani arena and restoring the traditional, tribal-secular system of government. An official spokesman for the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], Qarib Rahman Sa'id, states, "The Taleban movement is traditional and wants to take the brotherliness out of the Muslim Brotherhood and the love out of the founder of the Pakistani Islamic Society, Abu-al-A'la Al-Mawdudi" [a play on words in the original, as Mawdudi is based on an adjective meaning "beloved"]. He added, "Borhanoddin Rabbani has informed us that the Taleban are a dirty river that will sweep away anyone who stands in its way."

Bangladesh

EC Imposes Restrictions on Election Campaigning

BK0612021295 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 5 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Some restrictions on campaign for the ensuing parliamentary elections have been issued by the Election Commission [EC]. Reminding the intending candidates of the provisions of the People's Representative Order of 1972, the commission made it clear that no candidate or anyone on behalf of him or her can print multicolor poster, erect any gate, make cloth banner, and write on the wall.

The order provided for a punishment of maximum seven years and minimum two years of rigorous imprisonment with fine for violation of any of its provisions. Being a cognizable offense, the violators will be liable to arrest without warrant, and they will be on nonbailable detention. The EC has advised all concerned to refrain from such activities. Any prospective candidates if already printed such multicolor posters, erected gates, or written on the wall have been asked to destroy or remove them to avoid penalty.

EC Committee To Probe Preelection Irregularities

BK0812022795 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Election Commission [EC] has constituted Electoral Inquiry Committee comprising district-level judiciary officials to inquire into preelection irregularities. This was announced by gazette notification of the EC today. A subjudge and a senior assistant judge or assistant judge of every district will act as electoral committee. The committee will inquire any such complaint and report to the EC. Those who have been given the responsibility of running the Electoral Inquiry Committee have been advised to join their respective workplace immediately.

Political parties and candidates participating in the forthcoming general elections are to abide by the election code of conduct from today. A press release issued by the EC in Dhaka today said the code of conduct has been made a rule following its gazette notification. The EC has requested all concerned political parties and contesting candidates to abide by the code of conduct.

Election Commission Orders Illegal Arms Recovery

BK0712090995 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Election Commission has directed all concerned authorities to recover all kinds of illegal arms and explosives by the 15th of next month. The directive has been given for holding the ensuing parliamentary elections in a free, fair, and impartial manner, and ensuring the franchise of voters. The commission has also asked them to remain vigilant so that miscreants, manufacturers of illegal arms and explosives, and those possessing illegal weapons are not able to destroy the environment of the elections.

The Election Commission has also advised the authorities to take necessary measures to declare a general amnesty under which such miscreants can surrender their arms and explosives within a stipulated period. If anybody fails to surrender the illegal arms within the stipulated period, the commission has directed to arrest them and conduct an (?integrated) raid throughout the country to recover such arms.

The chief election commissioner has sought active cooperation from the senior officials of the Armed Forces to help the voters exercise their franchise and hold the coming general elections in a free, fair, and impartial manner. The cooperation was sought at a meeting of the senior officials of the Army, Navy, and Air Force in Dhaka yesterday. The meeting discussed necessary measures to maintain a congenial law and order during the elections and specially for recovery of all illegal arms.

Injuries Reported in Opposition-Police Clashes

BK0712164595 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A number of people were injured in clashes between police and opposition activists during a rally addressed by Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina at Pantha Path in Dhaka today. The clashes erupted after explosion of a series of bombs at the venue of the rally. Addressing the gathering, Sheikh Hasina appealed to the people to remain united to realize their demand for exercising their rights to franchise freely and fearlessly.

The Jamaat-i-Islami secretary general Matiur Rahman Nizami has said the opposition demand for neutral caretaker government is to ensure fair elections free from party influence and anarchy. Addressing a public meeting at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram today, he said the opposition demand for a neutral caretaker government is not to unseat anybody or install any party to power.

The acting chairman of the Jatiya Party, Mr. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, has reiterated his party's call for immediate formation of a neutral caretaker government to facilitate the participation of the opposition parties in the coming general elections. He was addressing a meeting at Mogbazar Road crossing in the capital this afternoon. The opposition activists damaged motor vehicles on the streets and at several places set fire to buses and cars.

India

Minister Assails U.S. Move on Arms to Pakistan

BK0812010295 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for external affairs, Mr. R.L. Bhatia, has said Pakistan is acquiring sophisticated weapons to become a military power in the region. Releasing a book Genesis of Regional Conflict — Kashmir, Afghanistan, Cambodia, West Asia, Chechnya, in New Delhi yesterday, he said the recent decision by the U.S. to supply arms worth $370 million to Islamabad is bound to escalate arms race in the region. He said the growing regional conflicts will pose serious problems in international relations.

Participating in the panel discussion, the CPI [Communist Party of India] leader, Mr. M. Farooqi, alleged that the United States is behaving like a bully. He said the capitalist countries are generating regional conflicts to further their own interests.

The former foreign secretary, Mr. T.N. Kaul, said if the wave of religious fundamentalism is not stopped it could lead to dismemberment of many countries.

Dailies Address Minister's Charges Against U.S.

Minister Warned Over 'Empty Charges'

BK0712144395 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 6 Dec 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Chavan Jumps the Gun"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On the face of it, the Home Minister, Mr S B Chavan's scathing attack on the United States in the Rajya Sabha this week is just the latest salvo in the war of words waged by him against Washington over the past several years. It was Mr Chavan who, shortly after the P V Narasimha Rao Government came to power, made the astounding charge that a super power was behind Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, although he stopped short of naming the United States. Since then the Home Minister has expressed his ire with the White House on quite a few occasions, taking particular umbrage at the US policy on Kashmir. This is the first time, however, that Mr Chavan has in so many words accused the United States of "having evil designs" on the troubled border State, blaming it for creating problems there.

The immediate provocation for Mr Chavan's strong words appears to be the recent visit by controversial US Assistant Secretary of State, Ms Robin Raphel, whom he has accused of jeopardising the normalisation process in Kashmir. In fact, the Home Minister has gone to the extent of alleging that every time the situation seemed to be on the mend in the Valley, some US official came here and made a statement describing Kashmir as a disputed territory.

Interestingly, Mr Chavan, who said that he was making the statement "with a full sense of responsibility", which had the sanction of the Government, failed to mention what steps were being taken to follow up charges against the US. It is also significant that despite the strong language used by the Home Minister and the gravity of his allegations, there has been only a low-key response from Washington with an US embassy spokesman merely dismissing the charges as "without basis".

Considering that Mr Chavan's previous tirades against the United States have been taken with a pinch of salt by the State Department, it is unlikely that his statement this week would lead to a sudden disruption of bilateral ties between the two countries.

It is quite possible that the Home Minister, with the tacit backing of Mr Rao, has made such drastic charges against the United States to express the Government's deep resentment at the recent waiver of the Pressler Amendment, which has facilitated the export of US arms worth over one billion dollars to Islamabad. Monday's [4 December] statement may also be a ploy by the Government to win support from Washington for its bid to hold elections in Kashmir. Finally, there is little doubt that Mr Chavan, who was congratulated for his remarks by MPs cutting across party barriers, was also guilty of playing to the gallery. However, whether such posturing is of actual help to India's case on Kashmir is doubtful. If, indeed, the Home Minister is so disturbed by US machinations on Kashmir, he should do something about it. Otherwise it may be better not to jump the gun without any intention to pull the trigger. Empty charges without any follow up action is not likely to gain the Government respect either at home or abroad.

Claim of 'Evil Designs' Said Correct

BK0712150195 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 6 Dec 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Chavan's Attack"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MR S.B. Chavan's criticism of the US for its "evil designs" on Kashmir is one of the sharpest made by an Indian leader in recent years. Considering that it is the statement made by the country's Home Minister, and in Parliament, it is bound to be taken seriously by the people who harbour suspicions about American intentions in the region. It has also been clear that the interest the US professes to take in the problem has less to do with a genuine desire for settlement than with advancing its own strategic plans. Indeed, for Washington, this latter purpose is probably better served by maintaining an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty in Kashmir.

The Home Minister was entirely right, therefore, when he asserted that the Americans were not interested "either in Pakistan or in India" but that they only wanted to "get a foothold in Jammu and Kashmir". So it is that whenever there is a slight improvement in the situation, "some US official comes here and makes a statement that Kashmir is a disputed territory". As a matter of fact, the Americans once went even so far as to doubt the entire process of Kashmir's accession which, in theory, can unravel the Incorporation of the princely states with India after independence.

It is not difficult to understand, of course, the reasons for the American attitude. For a start, used to dealing with subservient states in the Third World, Washington finds India's size and independent stand difficult to accept. New Delhi's past Soviet connections were a hindrance for several years. In contrast, Pakistan remained the ever faithful ally, ready to do Washington's bidding in Afghanistan and elsewhere. For a while, Pakistan's links with Islamic terrorists had become far too obvious for the US not to put it on a watch list. But, thanks to the old cold war links between the two countries, Islamabad regained its position as a favourite, especially because it has obviously agreed to continue being the cat's paw of the US where its strategic interests in West and Central Asia are concerned. But the price it wants from America is support on Kashmir. Hence, the US insistence on the unsolved problem of Kashmir's status when the only problem there is Pakistan inspired terrorism to which the US is conveniently blind.

Not only that, after a brief pause, the US has become blind again to Pakistan's nuclear programme which is why the Clinton administration has resumed arms supplies to Pakistan after the passage of the Hank Brown amendment. Admittedly, each country serves primarily its own interests. Nor is this the first time that the US has tilted towards Pakistan. But Mr Chavan seems to be reminding the Americans that their tendency to take India for granted is not helpful in building a stronger relationship between India and the United States, despite the improvement in ties between the two countries during the last five years.

Criticism Said Backed by Congressmen

BK0812084295 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 7 Dec 95 p 11

[Article by M.D. Nalapat: "Congressmen Support Chavan's Criticism of United States"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rather than Home Minister S.B. Chavan's statements on U.S. designs on Kashmir being an "embarrassment" to the ruling party — as alleged by unnamed spokesmen for the Clinton administration in Washington — it is the low-key response of the MEA [Ministry of External Affairs] towards such designs that is worrying senior leaders of the Congress party. Since 1991, policy on the United States has largely concentrated on "accommodating" U.S. susceptibilities even on sensitive issues.

Senior Congress leaders are unwilling to join issue with the PMO [prime minister's office]-MEA policy towards the Clinton administration at this stage, but are, in the words of a Cabinet source, "happy that the prime minister himself has at last woken up to the reality," in the CPP [Chief Public Prosecutor] meeting on November 29, where he criticised U.S. policy for the first time. According to a Working Committee member who is also in the Cabinet, "the home minister has the support of the entire party for his stand against U.S. meddling in Kashmir." He claimed that Mr Chavan's statement could not have been made without clearance from the PM [prime minister] who after the Brown amendment "has realised the danger in giving a mild response when faced with threats to Indian interests."

High-level diplomatic sources say that one factor behind the current expression of official anger at U.S. policy was the two recent visits of the U.S. assistant secretary of state, Ms Robin Raphel, to the subcontinent. While the U.S. side was unwilling to divulge details of her discussions during the September and November visits governmental-level contacts in the countries she visited were more forthcoming. In Afghanistan according to high-level sources within the Rabbani government "she attempted to persuade Ahmed Shah Massud and others to accept a provisional government at Kabul that would be dominated by the Taleban." Such a move would have gone against New Delhi's policy of discouraging a fundamentalist takeover in Afghanistan.

In Sri Lanka, Ms Raphel — according to high-level officials in Colombo — informally floated the suggestion that the United States could help in mediating between the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and the Kumaratunga government. Here again these sources added, "she was met by a polite rebuff." In Bangladesh, Ms Raphel received a similar cold response to her efforts to mediate between Sheika Hasina Wajed and Begum Khaleda Zia. "Sheika Hasina, daughter of the founder of her country, will not allow any superpower intervention in Bangladesh," said a diplomatic contact close to the Dacca leader. In Delhi, Ms Raphel once again attempted to gauge Indian reaction to a possible U.S. role in "facilitating talks between India and Pakistan." In response. she was told to mind her own business said a top official who did not wish to be identified.

Senior leaders in the Congress Party are unhappy at the Rao government's "mild response" to U.S. pressure. They feel that India should enunciate a policy that "the states in the region — India Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Burma — should settle their differences between themselves, without any outside mediation," according to a senior party leader associated with foreign policy. According to him, "the cold reception given to Ms Raphel indicates the region's uneasiness at U.S. efforts to create a surrogate power so as to further its interventionist agenda." Predicted a senior policy analyst in Delhi, "the Bhutto game plan of accepting the role of U.S. surrogate will backfire and lead to the growth of anti-American feeling in Pakistan."

Security analysts in Delhi are surprised that "after the Afghanistan example, the United States is still covertly backing religious extremists such as the Taleban." In the case of Kashmir, they say that should the state get azadi, it would not be a moderate state but a fundamentalist one that would be a haven for terrorists to operate from, and within which would rage a civil war between the extremists and the Shias, Hindus and Buddhists. However, they add, "It may take a few more years for Washington to understand this." According to these analysts, "the Clinton policy of ignoring the role of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in training and funding extremists increases the risk of possible future U.S. military intervention in either country, when the fundamentalists now being nourished by the governments there become strong enough to make an open bid for power in Riyadh or Islamabad."

Commerce Minister Views Commercial Ties With U.S.

BK0812055695 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, has said the commercial relations between India and the United States should not be bogged down by minor setbacks like KFC [Kentucky Fried Chicken] and Enron. He was inaugurating the 18th meeting of the Indo-U.S. Joint Business Council in New Delhi yesterday. He said there is a definite uptrend in trade between the two countries.

Addressing the meeting, the union food minister, Mr. Ajit Singh, said that the scope for expansion in Indo-U.S. food processing sector is enormous.

Possible U.S. Action Seen Over Trade Violations

BK0812021795 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 5 Dec 95 p 12

[Editorial: "Basic Instincts"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It has been raining bad news for India's telecom reforms for some time. Now it seems to be pouring. United States telecom companies are reportedly seeking the intervention of the trade representative in the Matter of Mr Sukh Ram's decision to reopen some bids for basic telephone services. In New Delhi, a senior advisor to the World Economic Forum [WEF] upbraided the "lack of transparency" in power anti telecom reforms. Bad press for India's reforms is almost as old as the changes themselves. What distinguishes these charges is that they represent dear violations of contractual—Enron—or trade-legal—Mr Ram's cancelling the telecom bids—ethics. It will be foolish to hope Mr Ram's increasingly shady bias for Himachal Futuristic will blow over a la post-renegotiation Enron. For one, Enron hasn't blown over. A US embassy not so secret report clearly documents the potential damage. Second, Mr Ram's continuing flirtation with non-economic motives can blow up in the face of India.

The US government's definition of trade violations include both trade and investment. Hence, the infamous 301 sanctions can apply to the bids controversy. Further, Mr Ram's apparent preference for Himachal Futuristic, and the implied bias against US companies, can be seen as violating the most favoured nation premise, which rules out discrimination by national origin. Even the trade related investment measures section of the World Trade Organisation charter, to which India is a signatory, can be invoked by the US. There is thus at least a credible theoretical possibility the US will gun for India bilaterally, through 301s, or multilaterally, in the WTO, or both. The accused nation will know who to blame, its communications minister. But in situations of compounded guilt, punishing the guilty does not always have a therapeutic effect.

Of course, the stakes for US telecom companies in India are high. If only because the Indian market is so underdeveloped as to offer rates of expansion unavailable anywhere in the West, including domestic US markets. Outright bilateral sanctions or WTO dispute settlement embarrassments may not hound India. Also, India is not China or Japan; Washington's reactions are in proportion to perceived economic threats, not simply contractual or tender violations. But as the WEF official pointed out the cumulative effect of bad signals is considerable.

Mr Ram's call for new bids in the basic services cannot even be defended on technical grounds. To ask private operators in the basic services to adhere to a ceiling on the number of circles they can capture and a minimum amount of bid contrasts with the flexibility shown over cellular phone licences. In the latter, a single Indian company was allowed five licences with moderate to low bids. The distinguishing feature between the auctioning of basic and cellular services seems to be the absence of a fairy tale bid by a company reportedly close to the minister. Revealingly, official doubts over Himachal Futuristic's high bid seem to be absent. Although every knowledgeable private observer has expressed reservations. It is only natural foreign companies will be apprehensive under such arbitrary rules of the game. Perhaps, Indian telecom needs a different rulemaker, now.

Daily on Need for 'Mutually Beneficial' U.S. Ties

BK0812083095 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 7 Dec 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Tit for Tattle"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government of India must join issue with the United States State Department for allowing a relatively junior officer to dismiss as "complete nonsense" the views of the Union home minister, Mr S.B. Chavan, on U.S. interference in Kashmir. The home minister of India does not utter nonsense in Parliament. The fact that Mr Chavan chose the floor of the august House to express his disapproval of U.S. intentions on Kashmir suggests that there is, in fact, basis for such concern. Motivated quarters both in India and the United States may delight in depicting Mr Chavan as a bumbling politico, who attacks only to retract, but there is a method in this alleged "madness". Mr Chavan is not only the second in command in the Union cabinet, but his impeccable track record both as chief minister of one of India's premier states and as Union finance minister bears him out as a responsible politician. Of course, Mr Chavan can be faulted for not placing before the people the full picture of the foreign involvement in the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir. That would have allowed a realistic perception of the problem and of the kind of solutions that are possible and desirable. Mr Chavan has been inviting derisive comment because of his tendency to withdraw his statements once too often. Such behaviour could well be tactical, aimed at testing ground reactions, but the law of diminishing returns dictates that no technique be used again and again. This is perhaps why Mr Chavan's utterances are often mistaken for confused thinking.

The U.S. official has sought refuge in this reputation of Mr Chavan to make a statement which is in bad taste. While it is a media prerogative to lampoon ministers, whether within the country or outside at the level of the government, decency and decorum are expected norms of behaviour. The Indian media did pillory U.S. officials like Ms Robin Raphael and Ms Lynn Davies when they uttered "nonsense" on Kashmir, but the Indian Government correctly lodged only a politely worded formal complaint. Indeed, the tittle-tattle of junior State Department officials on Kashmir is more than mere "nonsense", often they are a deliberate provocation. The U.S. President, Mr Bill Clinton must reflect on the purpose served by such irresponsible members of his staff, when his distinguished ambassador to India, Mr Frank Wisner, is working hard to improve Indo-U.S. relations. Fortunately, despite the imbecility of the pro-Pakistani elements and the ante-deluvian Cold War ideologues in the State Department, Indo-U.S.

relations have remained on an even keel thanks to a vastly improved economic and business relationship. Far from fostering this mutually beneficial relationship, knee jerk India-baiters in Mr Clinton's administration seem determined to destroy it. Mr Chavan's measured and balanced statement in Parliament is an early warning and it is for Mr Clinton now to ensure that the healthy economic relationship that India is trying to build with the United States is not destroyed by the stratagems of Cold War warriors and the impetuosity of inexperienced officials.

Country, Spain Agree To Enhance Cooperation

BK0812022995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The two-day session of the Indo-Spanish joint committee concluded in New Delhi this evening. Agreed minutes were signed by the concerned officials of both sides in the presence of the commerce minister, Mr. P. Chidamabaram, and his Spanish counterpart, Mr. Javier Gomez-Navarro. The two countries agreed to step up cooperation in areas like tourism, marine products, shipping, telecommunication, food processing, and aviation.

Chemical Joint Venture Discussed With Japanese Firm

BK0812023595 Delhi BUSINESS STANDARD in English 6 Dec 95 p 13

[Report by Shehla Raza Hasan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation of the well-diversified Japanese conglomerate is holding talks with the Rs [rupees] 1,500-crore [crore equals 10 million] S K Birla group for a possible chemicals joint venture.

Mitsubishi Chemical Corporation managing director Takayori Tsuboi met senior S K Birla group officials during his recent visit here as part of a delegation of the Japanese ministry of international trade & industry.

"The Mitsubishi group does not have a presence in the chemicals sector in India. With the economy opening up, any such joint venture would be lucrative. We will welcome the proposal if it makes good business sense," a company official told Business Standard.

At present, both the sides are preparing pre-feasibility reports. The Japanese are keen on chalking out the product profile at the earliest.

The S K Birla group already has a chemical firm, Saurashtra Chemicals, to make soda ash and caustic soda.

Company sources did not rule out the possibility of the two groups jointly undertaking downstream projects of Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd.

Incidently, another Calcutta based company which has been approached by Asahi Chemicals, also of the Mitsubishi group, is IFB group of industries.

"Mitsubishi may have approached other large business houses also. Our meeting with them was simply introductory, yet held a lot of promise," Birla Eastern Ltd president B D Bose said.

The ministry of international trade and industry report, which is expected to be submitted to both the Japanese and Indian governments early next year, is said to be the last word in Japan's economic policy towards India.

Japan has been the only G-7 country to have followed a perceptible investment-shy policy since India's economic liberalisation four years ago.

The S K Birla group is, however, going ahead with its expansion plans in the cement sector.

It plans to undertake a Rs 600 crore project to set up a cement plant, along with a 25 megawatt capacity captive power plant at Gulbarga, Karnataka.

"The plant will initially have an installed capacity of 1.5 million tonnes per annum. It will be gradually increased to 3 million tonnes per annum," Birla Eastern Ltd president B D Bose said.

The capital structure of the proposed project has not yet been decided.

The proposed project is seen as an extension of the Mysore cement project, which is located at the same place.

At present, the company produces about 2 million tonnes of cement a year.

INSAT-2C Satellite Undergoes Orbit Operations

BK0712163395 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The multipurpose INSAT-2C which was successfully launched from Kourou in French Guiana this morning is now undergoing on orbit operations from the Master Control Facility — MCF — in Hassan, Karnataka. This is for orbit rising and final location in its cosmic home. ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] sources in Bangalore told our correspondent that the equipment and systems tested so far have yielded satisfactory results and the satellite is in perfect health. The satellite was launched with remarkable precision on board Ariane vehicle at

0453 hours [2323 GMT] this morning. The satellite has been tracked by MCF, Hassan. The other ground stations located at Perth, Australia; (Suchillo), Italy; and Clarksburg in the United States of America have also located it. The first apogee motor firing to raise the orbit of the satellite will be carried out around 0700 tomorrow morning. The satellite, seventh in the series and third of the second generation will enhance the telecommunication, broadcasting, telecasting, disaster warning, and meteorological observation capabilities of the country.

The Lok Sabha congratulated scientists, engineers, and workers of Indian Space Research Organization for the successful launch of INSAT-2C. The announcement made by the prime minister was responded with cheers and thumping of desks by all members. Mr. Narasimha Rao said the orbit raising, deployment of appendages, and initial testing of all the payloads are expected to take about three weeks.

Launching of INSAT-2C Detailed

BK0812082795 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country's second generation multipurpose communication satellite, INSAT-2C, was successfully launched today from Kourou in French Guiana. The satellite went into space aboard an Ariane rocket early this morning. Our correspondent Jayatri Chandrashekhar has filed this report from Bangalore:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent Chandrashekhar] India's capability in satellite communications received a tremendous boost with the successful launch of INSAT-2C, designed and built indigenously by ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization]. Twenty- seven minutes after lift-off, the spacecraft was injected into the transfer orbit. The Master Control Facility [MCF] at Hassan received the signal from the spacecraft two minutes later. The satellite, presently in a highly electrical path, is being tracked from Hassan and supporting earth stations in Australia, Italy, and USA. During the next few days, MCF Hassan will carry out several complex maneuvers through telecommand and raise the orbit to a circular path of 36,000 kilometers above the earth. The first apogee motor firing will be on Friday [8 December]. The necessary computers, motors, thrusters, and fuel are built into the spacecraft. Over the next three weeks, solar panels and the antennae will be opened out. INSAT-2C is expected to be operational in a month's time. It will open up West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Europe to Indian TV [Television] broadcast, besides strengthening TV signals within the country. It has mobile and business communications capability too.

[Dr. K. Kasturirangan, ISRO chairman] INSAT-2C is a very important satellite for our [word indistinct] space program. Since the country is looking forward to enhance it, if the telecommunications, television broadcasting through this satellite, there are new services that the satellite will open up in addition to enhanced capability of certain transponders which would enable us to broadcast the programs to the Indian populace and others interested well beyond the boundaries of India. [sentence as heard] So it's a very unique satellite, a satellite which is path breaking so far our space program is concerned.

[Correspondent] INSAT-2C will be co-located with INSAT-2B at 93.5 degree East longitude, thus making efficient use of the orbital slot. [end recording]

Iran

U.S. Mediation Efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan Assailed

NC0712124995 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "An Enemy Cannot Be a Mediator"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] When the Cold War ended many thought the world would see no more bloodshed and peace would be the dominant feature of our globe. Unfortunately, it did not happen.

In several countries centripetal forces were unleashed as a result of which we witness the disintegration of several sovereign states—most of them in developing countries.

The disintegration of these countries has been accompanied with civil war, genocide, fratricide and the death of children in some cases. The main losers of such atrocities have been innocent civilians. The main winners are the multinational arms manufacturers of the West.

After the U.S.-led multinational force invaded Iraq in 1991, hijacking the Security Council, the United States practically encouraged the Iraqi Kurds to form a separate state in northern Iraq—a clear instance of interference in Iraqi internal affairs.

But the Iraqi Kurds began fighting each other and the U.S. once again stepped in to catch fish in troubled waters. It is clear that the U.S. mediation in Iraqi Kurdistan is not out of benevolence. It stems from what Washington terms U.S. interests—a term used by the White House for justifying America's interference in various parts of the world.

How can the U.S. be a fair mediator when it is the main beneficiary of any war, in any part of the world, since the sale of armaments constitutes the mainstay of its economy?

Iran has a brilliant record of mediation in regional conflicts. For various reasons, the Kurds can rely on Iran's good offices to mediate between Kurdish factions in order to find a peaceful solution to their fratricidal war.

It is suicidal for the Kurds to rely on U.S. mediation. A wise man does not burn his finger twice. Having borne the brunt of the U.S. invasion in their country, the Iraqi Kurds should no longer trust the sworn enemy of Muslims.

Minister's Interview on Bosnia Reported

NC0712172695 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES (International Weekly) in English 30 Nov 95 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The Deputy Foreign Minister for International and Legal Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, here yesterday told the TEHRAN TIMES that the second meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference's Assistance Mobilization Group (AMG) was fruitful; the participants made crucial decisions on rendering assistance.

Terming the Bosnian peace accord unjust, Zarif said that the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] members stressed the need for comprehensive assistance (military and economic) to Bosnian Muslims.

The international community has not carried out its duties in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he said, adding that it is a stigma fat the international community.

Elaborating on the decisions reached, the deputy foreign minister said they may be summed up follows:

Firstly, the Islamic countries decided to continue their assistance to Bosnian Muslims in order to strengthen Bosnia's military power. Moreover, taking into account recent agreements regarding creating a military balance (aiming at making peace durable in the region), the participating countries decided that new military assistance should be given to the Bosnian people.

Secondly, with regard to the attempts of the West in their selective approach towards the OIC members for participation in the implementation of the peace accord, it was decided that all OIC members and its Contact Group be given a chance to participate in the implementation of the peace accord as a collective body, he said. Besides, the participants decided that they should have an active role at all stages of the implementation of the peace accord, Zarif added.

Thirdly, during the two-day negotiations Bosnian officials enumerated their needs. The participants agreed to undertake certain projects for reconstruction of Bosnia, he said, adding that each country would enter into bilateral talks with Bosnia to arrive at a practical way for implementing the projects.

The participants stressed the need for their presence in the ongoing peace process at this historic juncture, Zarif underlined. The AMG will meet again in Islamabad after the holy month of Ramazan (late February 1996).

AMG members will most likely meet before the 23rd meeting of the OIC foreign ministers, or at the time of the meeting to be held either in Conakry or Rabat on December 9 to follow up an the decisions of the earlier meetings.

GCC Resolution Said 'Unrealistic and Divisive'

LD0712213395 Tehran IRNA in English 2113 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 7, IRNA — Spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry Mahmud Mahmudi here Thursday [7 December] deplored a resolution issued at a summit meet of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] in Musqat Wednesday which, he said, was "unrealistic and divisive". He said the Persian Gulf summiteers in Musqat Wednesday had ignored Tehran's good will for resumption of talks in Doha.

Mahmudi said the heads of state of the Persian Gulf would have been wiser if they had "eschewed from fanning the flames of misunderstandings between Iran and UAE, and instead encouraged continuation of bilateral talks" between Iran and UAE. He added that such resolution would serve to protect the interest in the region of the foreign powers.

The spokesman of the Iranian Foreign Ministry also deplored the language of the resolution and its "unwise use of the word occupation with reference to Iran's undeniable title to islands in the Persian Gulf."

He said the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council would have been wiser if they had used the word with reference to the Zionist regime, and added that the resolution tended to divert attention from the Zionist occupation of the holy lands of Palestine.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry official said the good neighborly relations between Iran and the Persian Gulf states displeased only their common enemies which, he said, were now trying to torpedo the current talks between Iran and United Arab Emirates.

Mahmudi said Iran would be willing to continue talks with UAE on the basis of the contents of an official letter to President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in April 1992 by UAE Head of State Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan.

He added the Islamic republic looked forward to seeing an end to such "repetative and divisive" communiques that solely tends to play on hostile sentiments, and expected that UAE would support "the logical and practical method of mutual talks."

Press, Radio Comment on GCC Meeting in Oman

Agenda To Conceal 'Internal Crises'

NC0712214895 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 4 Dec 95 p 12

[Political commentary: "The Muscat Session and Some New Contentions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The 16th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] members will convene in Muscat, the capital of Oman, today. The session's agenda includes numerous issues such as relations with Iraq, Iran, and the Zionist regime which will be assessed by the participants.

The Muscat session is being held at a time when the prevailing atmosphere among the GCC members is far from amicable. The ongoing territorial disputes among these countries which at times culminated in border conflicts (such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia) continue, and most countries are apprehensive Saudi Arabia's domineering attitude.

On the other hand, the GCC members also have a common concern: the trend of democratizations of the governments of the Arabian peninsula. This trend which started with Qatar is also with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman.

The explosion in Riyadh is undoubtedly another important issue concerning the shaykhs. The fury of public opinion over the U.S. presence on the Arabian peninsula, and the corruption and despotism which prevails over its countries, which have prevented any signs of democratization from surfacing, is now manifesting itself in a more violent manner.

Now that the Muscat session will begin deliberations today, the announcement that such issues as lifting sanctions on Iraq, establishing trade relations with the Zionist regime, and addressing "territorial differences" between the UAE and Iran have been incorporated on the agenda of the shaykhs, indicates their efforts to conceal their own internal crises. The shaykhs are seeking to elicit the attention of the Zionists and their supporter, the United States, in order to strengthen their foreign base. On the other hand, by adopting an unprincipled stance by supporting the UAE's territorial claims, they are hindering the establishment of stability and tranquility in the Persian Gulf.

In any case, in view of the above mentioned factors one can state that each of the GCC member countries is facing a new conflict which defies solution by the tribal setup in these countries. Hence the export of the crises beyond their frontiers can not resolve these problems by itself and may only aggravate it further.

Support for UAE 'Elusive Claim' Opposed

LD0712203695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1930 GMT 7 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit concluded its work in Muscat on Wednesday [6 December] by releasing a statement. Part of the final statement of Muscat summit refers to the Iran-UAE differences, and the council has announced its support for the UAE's elusive claim of sovereignty over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf.

The PGCC summit statement further clarifies that the council expresses deep regret over the issue that Iran has not replied to the UAE's repeated and serious invitations for a peaceful settlement of the question of islands claims by the UAE. The council has also expressed concern to observe Iranian government's measures in violating the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates.

The unilateral approach of some member states of the PGCC to the question of Iran and the UAE, which is devoid of any diplomacy, is repeated for the umpteenth time. This trend shows each time that the diplomacy ruling the PGCC sessions is none but renouncement of foreign inductions [as heard], and contrary to what is interpreted from its title [Cooperation Council], the process of talks so far has led to nowhere but intensifying differences and removing friendship and mutual reliance and confidence.

For the first time, in 1992, Iran and Abu Dhabi initiated talks in order to resolve their differences. However, those talks were suspended because of the UAE officials' obstructionisms and bringing up of unrealistic issues. Consequently, the UAE foreign minister cancelled his visit to Tehran.

During the suspension of talks between the two countries, as far as Tehran is concerned, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always called for the resumption of these talks and the continuation of mutual negotiations for the settlement of differences. In the latest such measure, the Islamic Republic of Iran dispatched a delegation to

Doha during mid-November and once again proved its good intention for the resumption of talks providing the grounds for a meeting between the senior officials of the two countries.

This good intention still exists like in the past, and Iran will welcome any impartial attempt which will help the settlement of differences and removal of misunderstandings between Tehran and Abu Dhabi. But what makes these attempts fail is the elusive and superficial understanding of the UAE officials, and some countries supporting them, who intend to refer these differences to the international tribunals and turn the whole issue into an international one; a measure which is being supported by the interfering alien powers, and the Arab countries of the region follow this policy without thinking about the consequences of such a move.

Khamene'i on Need To Use, Restructure Qom Center

LD0712192895 Tehran IRNA in English 1846 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Holy Qom, Dec. 7, IRNA — On the fourth day of his visit to the holy city of Qom, the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i underlined the need for fully utilizing the both the moral and spiritual legacies of the establishment of the theological center. In a meeting with the seminary students in the holy city of Qom, he said the theological center should be independent from the government, but at the same time throw its support for the Islamic sovereignty.

The supreme leader pointed out that the judiciary branch, the executive body, the legislative power, universities, the armed services, the manufacturing sectors of the Islamic Republic of Iran need the valuable services of theologians and in fact, since the nation is run according to Islamic laws and jurisprudence, the need for the services of theological center be comes indispensable.

Elsewhere in his speech, the supreme leader said that the representatives of the Islamic republic who are a part of decision- making body in international forums and officials who present bold and astute decisions both international and nationalwise [as received] enjoy the respect of the intellectuals, the statesmen, diplomats, politicians, the youth, and the academicians of different nations.

Today, any move which contributes to promoting the honor and the dignity of the Islamic Republic is definitely for the sake of Islam, and those who are involved in such a pious task performing benevolent acts for the Islamic Republic do it for the sake of the Almighty Lord.

The supreme leader said helping and supporting the Islamic government should become a culture in the theological center. The theological center like a precious jewel should be used as the basis for the administration of the state. Consequently, the theological center should undergo restructuring. The curriculum of the theological center should be revised. The leader underlined that the ever-expanding process of improvement of the theological center would open the way to its practical applicability.

Elsewhere in his speech, the revered leader said the U.S. which boasts itself as the seat of western civilization, the center of scientific advances, the conglomeration of wealth, the base of military power, source of information networks and which in fact is a den of corruption, about two million of the black American population, among whom many were not Muslims, took to the streets and cried out the Islamic verse of Allah-o-Akbar, God is the greatest.

The leader stated that this important phenomenon requires the Muslim propagators to reminisce [as received] about their (two million Americans) motive based on Islamic logic.

Deputies Give Interview on 'Free Elections'

NC0812085795 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 4 Dec 95 pp 1, 2, 3

[Report on interview with Dr. 'Ataollah Mohajerani, vice president for legal and parliamentary affairs, and Dr. Seyyed Javad Angeji, Tabriz Majles deputy and member of the Majles executive committee, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] With 95 days remaining until the fifth elections of the Islamic Majles, ABRAR aims to present the views and opinions of various personalities, groups, and factions as part of its Islamic revolutionary, national, and journalistic mission. Dr. Seyyed 'Ataollah Mohajerani and Dr. Seyyed Javad Angeji were interviewed by ABRAR this week in this regard.

In the interview Dr. Mohajerani said: The ideal Majles would be one in which the people believe that their true representatives are present. Elections should be free, and be free of any sort of guardianship [qeymumiyat].

Dr. Angeji also stressed: If we were meant to vote with our ears closed to whatever the government says, or our eyes closed to whoever the government introduces, that would make the Majles another one of the government's departments and therefore no longer deserving of the Majles name.

The interview is as follows:

[ABRAR] How does the Majles consider motions and bills? Is the process proposed or dictated by the government or does the Majles appraise bills and proposals with the help of experts?

[Angeji] Because the committees have a limited number of members, naturally they work with experts. The committees then submit their findings to the Majles, where its 270 members debate the bills and proposals. I do not believe that any one minister or faction can dictate matters to the Majles.

I would not rule out, however, that a deputy could be in contact with a ministry and accept its opinions. But I do not believe that anyone could dictate matters. This type of atmosphere does not and has never existed in the Majles. [passage omitted]

[ABRAR] Some time ago the president spoke to the cabinet on several issues including the elections, appointments, and dismissals. Can you tell us more about this?

[Mohajerani] The president told the cabinet session that if appointments and dismissals were made on the pretext of the elections and ministers were pressured into changing various managers, the pressure would naturally fall on the departments that are closely connected to the elections. The case of the interior minister was noted as an example; it would be unlawful for him to make changes. However, if a minister were to decide that work was not progressing as it should and that change was needed, then there would be no problem.

[ABRAR] Were these pressures exerted by the Majles?

[Mohajerani] The pressures were for the most part exerted by the Majles. There have been occasions when a deputy believed that an administrative manager was potentially a rival candidate. However this has only been the case in Tehran.

The president uses the elections and Majles as forums in which to state his opinions. The president says that the elections are for the people. This means that in the elections the people must use their votes to elect the most qualified deputy. We do not have to like the people's choice. As a group we do not have the right to express approval of the people's choice. [passage omitted]

The esteemed president favors free elections. He wants the people to feel that the Majles is theirs. It is not to the benefit of the Majles that one group should have an absolute majority, as in the third Majles when the left was in the majority and the fourth Majles when the right was in the majority. These situations deprive the Majles of creativity and innovation.

The ideal Majles would be one in which the people feel that they are truly represented. If a limited group adopts a decision that is swiftly ratified in the Majles, then that is another matter. I believe that the elections should be free and free from guardianship.

Corruption in Regime Detailed

96LH0005A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 30 Sep 95 pp 34-36

[Article by Dr. 'Ali Nurizadeh: "Iran: Wealth of Revolution Fat Cats Tops Wealth of Pahlavi Family — Tale of Corruption in the Ayatollahs' Republic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the main slogans that Iran's late leader, Imam Khomeyni, used against the shah and the shah's regime from his exile in al-Najaf before he came to power was a slogan that a Iranian poet made into a verse of poetry that demonstrators began to intone in the streets of Tehran. Freely translated, the verse said: "They have put the country into their pockets: such pockets can hold countries."

By this slogan the late imam meant that the shah, his family, and the upholders of his regime had smuggled the people's treasury out of the country. When the imam defeated the shah and took his seat on the peacock throne, he had his prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, form a special committee to investigate how much money had been smuggled out of the country by the Pahlavi family and by senior military and civilian officials. The aim was to submit requests to recover the money as part of the treasury and the Iranian people's wealth. Requests were to be addressed to judicial authorities in Switzerland, Britain, and the United States, in whose banks, according to the prevailing belief, the money had been deposited.

The committee issued the results of its investigations about five months later at a meeting of the Supreme Revolutionary Council in the presence of council members and Imam Khomeyni's representative, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani (now president of the republic).

As the media had already announced that they would publish the results of the committee's investigations in detail, Bazargan's announcement on leaving the Supreme Revolutionary Council meeting that the government had decided at Imam Khomeyni's command not to release what the committee had discovered raised many questions about the revolutionary leader's motives for hiding the results of the committee's investigations from the people.

In an interview with Bazargan a few weeks after the disbanding of the committee, I asked him why he had declined to tell the people what he had been told about thefts by the Pahlavis and their cohorts. Bazargan's reply came as a surprise to me. He said, "Will the people believe the committee's report that the Pahlavi family during more than 50 years diverted no more than $500 million? — when we had accused the shah alone of smuggling $20 billion out of the country and when Imam Khomeyni himself said in his speech two days after the victory of the revolution that the Pahlavi family stole more than $100 billion!"

Cleansing Society

The revolution put "combating corruption" and "cleansing society" from the plagues of bribery, kickbacks, and smuggling at the forefront of its goals. At the beginning of this September, when Tehran General Court 40, headed by Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohseni, sentenced Fazel Khodadad to death and sentenced his partners—including Mortaza Rafiqdust, the brother of Mohsen Rafiqdust, head of the Agency for the Oppressed, former minister of defense, and a senior pillar of the regime — to life imprisonment for embezzling 130 billion tumans ($670 million at the official exchange rate, or $1 billion at the black market rate), all could clearly see the extent to which the revolution, after 17 years of ringing slogans and repeated claims about building "a model society with no difference between ruler and ruled," had succeeded in cleansing the society from the sickness of corruption, smuggling, and stealing the people's wealth.

According to Bazargan's 1979 avowal, the Pahlavi family smuggled no more than $500 million out of the country. In 1995, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohseni, head of the General Court, announced that Fazel Khodadad and his partners had smuggled $670 million out of the country in a single year.

Amounts Embezzled

According to reports published in the Iranian media, the Supreme Office of the Judiciary is studying dossiers of 435 cases of embezzlement of public funds. According to preliminary estimates, more than $2.3 billion have been embezzled from four Iranian banks (Bank-e Saderat, Bank-e Sepah, Bank-e Tejarat, and Bank-e Melli). The newspaper, RISALAT AL-TALABAH, recently suppressed by the Ministry of Guidance, revealed sizable embezzlements amounting to about $900 million in a number of government agencies, such as the National Tobacco Company, the Agency for the Oppressed, and the Copper Company. Although President Hashemi-Rafsanjani gave the head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Yazdi, the green light to prosecute everyone shown to have been involved in cases of embezzlement, regardless of rank, connections, and links to revolutionary figures and high-ranking religious scholars, Yazdi was subjected to severe pressures from the circles of the supreme guide of the revolution and certain power centers when he ordered three of his assistants to begin investigating the involvement of one of the brothers of the supreme guide of the revolution in an oil deal with several foreign companies. He also received warnings from certain senior religious scholars in Qom, who openly threatened that they would not allow him to subject their sons and brothers to judicial prosecution.

A story that Iranians are telling these days concerns Hojjat ol-Eslam A. F., who, as former representative in Syria of the supreme head of the revolution, built himself a financial empire in Damascus. Although the Iranian ambassador in Damascus, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Hasan Akhtari, sent several reports about the activities of Khamene'i's representative and his involvements with representatives of foreign companies and organizations eager for commercial deals with Iran and about his personal behavior, the office of the supreme head of the revolution, which is responsible for appointing his representatives at home and abroad, showed no interest in the reports. Finally, President Hashemi- Rafsanjani himself decided to pursue the affair and sent a diplomat to Damascus to gather information and documents about the hojjat ol-eslam's deeds. When the diplomat returned to Tehran with a portfolio of details about the activities of the representative of the supreme head of the revolution, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani went directly to Khamene'i and opened the portfolio in his presence. Only after receiving guarantees that the man would be summoned back to Tehran did he leave the office of the supreme head of the revolution.

Before the representative of the supreme guide of the revolution was notified of the decision to transfer him to Tehran, he left for Germany to undergo medical tests, during which it became evident that he might need a simple surgical procedure to open one of his coronary arteries. As is customary in Western hospitals, the physician asked an Iranian diplomat in Bonn who was accompanying the representative as translator to obtain the patient's signature on a printed form in German stating the patient's consent to undergo the operation.

After consulting with the ambassador (who naturally got President Hashemi- Rafsanjani's permission by telephone), the translator used the opportunity to obtain the signature of the Damascus representative of the supreme guide of the revolution not only on the hospital form but on another paper prepared by the embassy without informing the representative of its content. By virtue of this paper, Hojjat ol-Eslam A. F. gave the ambassador power of attorney to withdraw all his money from three German bank accounts. In this way, the ambassador restored to the Iranian treasury DM6 million that the representative had transferred from Damascus to his German bank accounts. After leaving the hospital, the representative found out what had happened to his accounts, and, at the same time, he received an order from the supreme guide of the revolution to return to Iran. However, he did not return to Tehran, but went to Damascus, where he owns real estate, companies, and a hospital in his name.

The second story is about the son of the representative of the supreme guide of the revolution in Khorasan province, who has earned the nickname of Mr. Five-Percent, because of his role in concluding commercial deals with foreign firms, for which he usually receives 5 percent.

This spoiled son, whose name is Naser, owns 48 luxury buildings in Tehran and Mashhad and is a partner in 20 commercial companies and import-export businesses. His deposits in foreign banks are estimated at $300 million. A few years ago, revolutionary millionaire Naser married the daughter of Mr. Three-Percent, the brother of one of the pillars of the regime. Mr. Three-Percent's fortune is said to exceed that of all the members of the Pahlavi family together.

The wedding of Mr. Five-Percent to the daughter of Mr. Three-Percent at the Hilton (now Independence) Hotel resembled a party from the Arabian Nights. Two thousand men and women attended (the latter in separate rooms). The groom served his guests food prepared by the best Paris restaurants to prove that he was more lavish than the shah, who brought food from Maxime's in Paris for his guests (they numbered only 500) at the Persian monarchy's 2,500-year anniversary celebration.

The third story is about the mansion of Hojjat ol-Eslam Khalkhali, the revolutionary judge who prides himself on having sentenced 3,000 important Iranian figures of the shah's regime — intellectuals, writers, students, and artists — to death. Khalkhali is said to have bought the mansion for a token amount from the Agency for the Oppressed, which oversees properties confiscated after the revolution. The owner of the mansion had been one of the ministers whom Khalkhali sentenced to death. Khalkhali moved into the mansion with his family several years ago, but the curse of the owner began to pursue him wherever he went; so he decided to divest himself of it for a mere 180 million tumans.

These stories and tales have become the talk of Iranian society. The oppressed, to whom Imam Khomeyni promised prosperity, wealth, social justice, and freedom look indignantly on the mansions and villas going up to the north of the capital and in the expensive suburbs of big cities such as Mashhad, Esfahan, and Shiraz for hojjat ol-eslams and ayatollahs and their children and relatives. The sight of luxury Mercedes automobiles, some of them armored, on the streets of Tehran has made the poet whose famous verse was recited during the revolution and whom we mentioned at the beginning of the article compose a second verse: "They have eaten up the country: such bellies can hold countries."

Kish Air Officer on Need for Private Airlines

96LA0051A Tehran PARVAZ in Persian Jul-Sep 95 pp 18, 19

[Article by Pilot Yadollah Khalili, deputy director for trade of Kish Air]

[FBIS Translated Text] **Do Not Give Subsidies, Only Funds**

Allow me to state my conclusions as an introduction to what I have to say, which is, the need for the existence of non-government airline companies has never been studied in Iran in a fundamental manner. What can be said about the problems of non-government airlines all goes back to this point.

Along with the increase in population growth in recent years, on the one hand, and the government policy regarding the general use of airplanes, on the other, there are factors that must be mentioned, such as the growth in airline travel. Of course, if we seek other factors, certainly we must speak about the insufficient development of road transport as well, but what I want to address in this article is the crisis that has occurred in the non-government airlines.

In other words, with the end of the imposed war and the service of "SAHA" to all members of the society, the Supreme Council of Aviation also, by emphasizing and increasing the capacity and creating a balance in the supply and demand for flights (which in practice the two government companies of "HOMA" and "Aseman" could not carry out), without taking into consideration the substructure and precise planning, began to issue licenses for the establishment of airline companies without knowing the consequences of this action for the future of the country and the owners of private airlines.

Of course, allow me to point out that the use of the phrase private airline companies is incorrect, and we must use non-government airline companies because this problem is also one of the fundamental factors of today's chaos in these companies. In other words, according to Article 44 of the Constitution, the airline industry of the country is under government rule, and according to the same article, when it was decided that airline companies should be created, the first licenses were offered to applicants who somehow benefited from the support of a government organization or at least enjoyed the support of such units to start their activities.

Hence, you see that in a short period of time, several nongovernment airline companies and several private airline companies were established to respond to the immediate needs (creating a balance and increasing seats). They engaged in leasing airplanes from the newly independent Soviet counties, mainly Russia. The rapid use of such airplanes naturally required them to be leased with accompanying flight and technical crews, because, on the one hand, the training of our own manpower could not be justified and, on the other, there was a lack of overall policy to support or even take responsibility for these companies.

The lack of this overall policy that would have to define the goal of establishing nongovernment airlines (or in a sense private) companies and plan for their growth and expansion resulted in the existence of these companies being misinterpreted in implemental affairs, and it was only by relying on being private and the spread of privatization that many changes were imposed more than ever before in the executive rights of these companies (vis-a-vis the two government companies).

For example, setting different fuel rates for private companies and the government airline companies caused the operational costs of Kish Air to increase by 80 million tumans last year. Payment of cash subsidies to government companies is also the second problem that has resulted in the lack of development of private companies, because the difference in the price of government tickets vis-a-vis nongovernment rates results in the decrease in the number of passengers and, on the other hand, counter-publicity for these companies. These factors, along with laws that give a free hand to the parent airline company in establishing new routes, have added doubly to the problem and the decrease in the graph of the activities of the private companies.

For example, last month, Kish Air proposed to the National Aviation Organization the establishment of planned routes to Sweden, but despite all the positive views of the honorable director of the organization, merely because the airlines of the Republic has also offered such a proposal, he considers the establishment of flights to Sweden the right of the parent airline company in accordance with the existing laws.

Here I must mention once again that the private airline companies have not been properly defined. In other words, just because the private companies are private should not be a motive to eliminate overall responsibility for the survival of that company, because the existence of a company on a large or small scale is based on the increase in the air passenger capacity; then, naturally, the survival of the company can meet the determined goals.

For example, at the present, Kish Air transports 3,000 people in the country every day. This is a portion of the passengers for whose transportation the government has made plans and given proposals. Then how can one be indifferent with regard to the implemental leverage of this goal (that is, a company that is responsible for the transport of passengers) and not make an effort towards its progress?

The importance of this support by the officials becomes more clear when we look at the future clearly and realize that:

1. With the present population growth, we will need more airplanes in the future.
2. The life of most existing government airplanes will end in a few years, and just to replace and not increase the existing fleet, huge amounts will have to be spent.
3. If the existing fleet is used, the safety of flights will be threatened.
4. Can the government companies provide the huge cost of replacing the fleet?
5. If subsidies to government companies are eliminated or decreased, these companies will have to modify their manpower to continue their activities.
6. Where will the dismissed expert government force be used?

Hence, you see that in order to meet the air passenger needs in the future, we must have a broader perspective. Also, you see that from this perspective, the existence of private airline companies will be necessary. Hence, regarding such companies as strangers and not supporting them is in fact an impediment to the above-mentioned greater goals.

Of course, what I mean by support is not cash subsidy. I only speak about support and allocation of funds to the private airline companies because we must accept that the policy of leasing airplanes is not an appropriate policy for the survival of these companies.

It is interesting that the three existing private companies alone pay the owners of airplanes $15 million annually for leasing, whereas, at the present time, for this amount, four Topolov-154 airplanes can be bought. Here I emphasize that the payment of rent is not the only existing problem, and to it the operational and cultural problems regarding the foreign flight crew must also be added.

Of course, the solution to this problem, that is, the continuation of the activities of the private airline companies at the present, is only possible by purchasing airplanes and offering support by the National Aviation Organization, such as tax exemptions until the company becomes profitable and offering discounts, such as landing and takeoff fees, departure and transit flights.

Government Cooperative Interference Criticized

96LA0051D Tehran RESALAT in Persian 9 Sep 95 p 15

[FBIS Translated Text] **Economic Affairs Division—Cooperatives are the best way to create suitable conditions in the area of employment and jobs in the country.**

According to a report by the economic correspondent of RESALAT, Hojjat ol-Eslam Shushtari, the minister of justice, made this announcement last Thursday [7 September] in a seminar on "The Constitution, Cooperatives, and Social Justice," which was held at the University of Tehran, and said: If the cooperatives are not expanded and developed, we will not succeed in providing suitable conditions and resources to create employment and jobs in the society.

He added: Of course, it is possible that this issue is not exclusively related to the cooperatives, but it is one of the best ways to achieve this goal.

Based on this report, Engineer Akhundi, the minister of housing and urban development, also said in this seminar: In order to achieve success in all the political, social, and economic goals of the country, such public institutions as cooperatives that belong to all the people must be used.

The minister of housing and urban development mentioned the major problems of cooperatives to be weakness in management and the shortage of capital and added: At the present time, large-scale government interference in the cooperatives is not considered to be positive.

Dr. Hamid Mirzadeh, the deputy to the president and head of the Plan and Budget Organization, pointed out that one of the basic ways to achieve social justice and expedite the reconstruction of the country is to develop and strengthen the cooperatives and said: The people's participation is the issue, as one of the essential ways to achieve continuous economic growth and lasting development.

He said: In writing the annual budget, efforts will be made to increase the ability of the cooperatives.

The deputy president said: The number of cooperatives will increase from 29,000 at the present to 47,000 units by the end of the Second Plan.

Eng. Seyyed Morteza Nabavi, the deputy from Tehran in the Majles and chairman of the Economic Affairs and Finance Committee of the Majles, also said in a speech in this seminar: When we talk about cooperatives, we are talking about the civilization of a society and the close relationship between development and the expansion of cooperatives and the development of civilization in a society.

He added: From our perspective, the issue of cooperatives is a belief principle, and the structure of civilizations also goes back to the cooperatives.

The chairman of the Economic Affairs and Finance Committee of the Majles pointed out: Unfortunately, at the present, this balance is not in place, and with regard to a very large government sector, the cooperative and private sectors are very small.

Regarding the postponement of the proposal to combine the Ministry of Cooperatives and the Ministry of Commerce, he said: As soon as the signatories of this proposal felt that this issue might weaken the morale of the officials of the cooperative sector, they suggested to postpone it. Hence, it was removed from the agenda of the Majles.

In continuation, the deputy director of the Majles Research Center pointed out: Based on preliminary studies and research that this center had done, it became clear that the present problems of the cooperative sector will not be solved by combining it with the Ministry of Commerce, and if the purpose is to solve the problem, other solutions must be found.

He said: Government involvement in the cooperatives must be at the most minimum level possible, and this issue must be noted more than ever before. Interference that will harm the goals of the cooperatives must not exist.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Movahhedi-Savoji, the deputy from Tehran and chairman of the Councils Affairs and Internal Affairs Committee of the Majles, was the last speaker of the seminar, who said: Based on Islamic teachings, cooperatives are obligatory in production, construction and knowledge, but in prohibited actions, oppression, and injustice, we must cooperate with others.

He mentioned the necessity of the existence of cooperatives in fighting the class gaps, concentration of wealth in the hands of some people, and providing suitable grounds for the activities of potential and capable human beings who do not have capital and resources.

On the Sidelines of the Seminar

In his speech, Eng. Akhundi, the minister of housing and urban development, referred to the interference of officials in the affairs of the cooperatives and said: The ministers and officials of organizations interfere a great deal in their cooperatives, which is not proper and it must be reduced.

During his speech, Eng. Shafe'i, the minister of cooperatives, gave a sheet of paper to someone to give to the minister of housing. The message was that "such interference is not legal, and the ministers do not interfere a great deal."

After reading the message, Eng. Akhundi continued: In my opinion, there is a lot of interference, at least in our own ministry there is a lot of interference.

In his speech, Eng. Akhundi also referred to the issue of the Refah Chain Stores and the fact that he "wrote a letter to one of the officials and said that these stores can be entrusted to our cooperative, but there is so much disbelief regarding the abilities of the management of cooperatives that no one thought the cooperative was able to do it."

He added: Of course, I am still pursuing the matter.

In another part of his speech, the minister of housing and urban development pointed out the existence of numerous distribution centers throughout the country and their effect on increasing the price of goods and inflation and said: For example, in Tabriz, for a population of 1.3 million people in this city, there are 100,000 stores. In other words, for every 13 people, there is one store. In Yazd, for every seven or eight people, there is a store. With the establishment of cooperatives, the uncontrolled growth of distribution units can be prevented.

He said: The Urban Development Division of the Ministry of Housing is at the present studying the number of stores and their economic effects throughout the country.

Also, Eng. Seyyed Morteza Nabavi, the deputy from Tehran in the Majles, said regarding the necessity of creating university graduate organizations in the form of cooperatives: In this regard, we had a discussion with Dr. Jesemi (the president of the Free University), and he has also written a letter to president Hashemi-Rafsanjani about this.

At the end of the seminar, a number of people were "dozing off" and the speech of Hojjat ol-Eslam Movahhedi-Savoji, the chairman of the Councils Affairs and Internal Affairs Committee of the Majles, woke them up.

In his speech, he said: The Ministry of Cooperatives has two problems. First, regarding its accomplishments, the cooperatives that it has created, and generally about its programs, it has not done any publicity. Since this time Eng. Shafe'i accepted the responsibility for the ministry, perhaps because he avoids personal publicity, he has not been after publicity.

Referring to the separation of the Rural Cooperative Organization, the Rural Cooperatives of the Carpet Weavers, and the Fishermen's Cooperative from the Ministry of Cooperatives, he said: Tomorrow, they might say that several other cooperatives should be separated from the ministry.

He emphasized: If there is going to be a Ministry of Cooperatives, the main function of the cooperative is production and not selling beans and chick peas. Selling beans and chick peas is not the function of cooperatives. Article 44 of the Constitution referring to the cooperative sector is in connection with production.

Movahhedi-Savoji continued: The gentlemen (government officials) themselves shouted slogans in support of this sector, but on the other hand, the bill came from the government itself to separate some sectors or other from the Ministry of Cooperatives. From the very beginning, I have defended the cooperative sector. I said, if it is so, the Ministry of Cooperatives must be dissolved.

The deputy from Tehran in the Majles said: All the cooperatives that are active in production, agriculture, and industry must be placed under the control of the Ministry of Cooperatives.

Regarding the loan payments to the cooperative sector, he said: Some say that funds given to the cooperatives have not been spent on production. In response, it must be said: In the past year, millions of dollars were spent on the import of luxury goods and vehicles into the country. Sina Vehicle Manufacturing had said that it wants to import 2,000 vehicles and manufacture them. [sentence as published] From the beginning, the discussion was about manufacturing vehicles, but later this gentleman greatly deceived the banking system and the Ministry of Industries of the country and imported 2,000 vehicles with dollars at R600, and I know that it wants to import hundreds of vehicles.

Also, Kerman Vehicle Manufacturing has imported a large number of vehicles while the rest of the companies have imported various cars, and the pricing system does not question where they got them.

Pointing out that the change in the consumer model of the society is due to the import of luxury items and foreign vehicles, Hojjat ol-Eslam Movahhedi-Savoji said: The leader of the revolution spoke against the ceremoniousness of the officials and their riding in Mercedes Benzes. One of the banks had imported 50,000 Mercedes Benzes, and following the statements of the leader of the revolution it hid them. Gradually, a few years passed, and the statements of the leader of the revolution lost their impact. The officials began to ride in new model cars. They said: Let us start from the deprived provinces and give Mercedes Benzes to the heads of the banks in the deprived provinces. This is how they started, until they reached Tehran. This kind of behavior is not proper.

Pakistan

Minister Rejects Report on U.S. Base in Country

BK0812035895 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Shaikh, has said there is growing confidence among the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] members that it was moving in the right direction and the recently concluded Preferential Trade Agreement is a big leap forward. He was speaking at a reception he hosted in Islamabad yesterday to mark the 10th anniversary of the founding of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The reception hosted by the foreign secretary was attended among others by heads of missions of SAARC countries and senior officials of international organizations.

Later talking to newsmen informally, he referred to Pak-India relations and said Pakistan could not enter into the dialogue with India unless it was assured that these would be substantial. To a question on the deportation of illegal immigrants residing illegally in Karachi, he said action is being taken without any discrimination.

Replying to another question, the foreign secretary categorically rejected a report carried by Radio Moscow on Wednesday [6 December] that the United States intends to set up military base in Azad Kashmir. He said there is no question of allowing any foreign base on Pakistani soil or Azad Kashmir.

Islamabad Reiterates Support of Bosnia Accord

BK0812041195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has reiterated its support to the recently concluded agreement on Bosnia between the warring parties. A Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad yesterday that Pakistan has also confirmed to NATO for the provision of a brigade to work under UN command for strengthening peace process there. He recalled that Pakistan has already contributed $1 million for International War Crimes Tribunal on former Yugoslavia and it would also seek support for economic and humanitarian assistance to Bosnia from the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] member states.

The spokesman said that the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, would have in-depth discussions with his counterparts of the OIC Contact Group to evolve a joint strategy to assist Bosnia. The spokesman said Pakistan would like to seek adoption of resolutions on important matters by the meeting of OIC foreign ministers like establishment of nuclear free zone particularly in South Asia, security against threat or use of nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states, assistance to Muslims in non-Islamic states, and problems of refugees in Muslim world.

Minister Says Expulsion of French NGO Final

BK0712124695 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 7 Dec 95 p 12

[Report by Mariana Baabar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Minister of Interior Nasirullah Babar did not mince his words Wednesday [6 December] when he said no amount of pressure from France would make the government reverse its decision of the expulsion of 11 French nationals belonging to the-French-funded NGO [Nongovernmental Organization] Madera.

"It is the prerogative of every sovereign state to safeguard its interest and take responsibility for its internal security," he said talking to this correspondent.

Babar was commenting on the decision taken by the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] government of expelling the members of Madera for allegedly working for Afghan President Burhanoddin Rabbani. They are accused of "passing on information" to his government. The NGO was closed down on Nov 27.

The Foreign Office on Tuesday acknowledged it had entered into a dialogue with the French Ambassador leading to the conjecture that the government was going to reverse its decision in face of French pressure. "I am not aware of these talks," said Babar.

When asked about reports that a French team was about to arrive from Paris to take up the case of Madera, the Minister said, "any number of teams can come from France. They will not change our stand."

Babar declined to divulge any details when asked what possibly the lethal information and material could be that Madera was allegedly accused of supplying to the Rabbani regime in Kabul.

The Minister gave the impression that the government will not stop at banning the French NGO. "We will be closing many more NGOs and eventually all will be asked to pack up whatever they are doing."

He said the foreign NGOs had made a commitment to the government that after training Pakistanis to take over they would leave. "But now they are bringing in their own people. There is this Dutch NGO that first came on a visitor's visa and now they are seeking a work visa. We have asked them to go through the normal procedure."

Sources in Peshawar said, "If these 11 French members of Madera do not leave voluntarily by Dec 11, they will have to be expelled."

Afghan Charge Rejected; NGO Move Defended

BK0812011095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has again rejected charges by Rabbani regime that it is interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. A Foreign Office spokesman told newsmen in Islamabad today that charges against Pakistan of interference by Kabul regime is a ploy to conceal the fact that control of Rabbani regime is limited and it is unable to take along all the Afghans.

Asked about Pakistan's action against the French NGO [Nongovernmental Organization], he said time has come to regulate working of foreign NGO's in Pakistan and in this connection Pakistan would not compromise its sovereign right to oversee the working of these organizations.

Prime Minister Bhutto Defends Country's Condition

Democratic System Safe; Press 'Liars'

BK0712105595 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 7 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Samar Gul Marwat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ghazni Khel — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto declared Wednesday [6 December] that the assembly will remain intact and there was no threat to the democratic system.

Addressing a public gathering here Ms Bhutto said those who became leaders during the eight years of martial law are now trying to grab power through dirty politics. "We have the people's mandate and came to power through proper way."

She once again criticized the role of the national press and termed the newspapers as liars. "Newspapers are liars. Journalists are the biggest liars. Do not believe in newspaper reports. They indulge in propaganda," she told the rally. She, however, said the press enjoys freedom of expression and there is no restriction on what newspapers publish. Ms Bhutto said the newspapers are publishing baseless stories about the assembly's dissolution.

The prime minister said reports are being published that she is making efforts to become the secretary general of the United Nations. "I will never leave Pakistan. I will live here to serve the people of Pakistan." She said she will soon come to Bannu to lay the foundation stone for the supply of Sui gas to the area.

Criticizing the PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] Ms Bhutto said these people looted the national exchequer when they were in power and now they are going to jails for the sake of industries. "We went behind bars for democracy and the people."

The prime minister blamed the Nawaz Sharif government for the present price hike, unemployment and corruption in the country. She said the opposition cannot see the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government putting the country on the road to development, therefore, is creating bottlenecks in the way. The prime minister said she understands the people's problems as she herself belongs to a village. She pledged the government will develop the villages all over the country and bring them at par with cities. She said her government has so far established 14,000 primary schools, provided five lakh [lakh equals 100,000] gas and 20 lakh telephone connections.

She approved the provision of Sui gas for Lakki Marwat and other southern areas of NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] and Kurram Tangi dam. She also announced new grid stations for Sarai Naurang and Lakki Marwat and a degree college for Sarai Naurang.

Ms Bhutto appreciated the political sagacity, valor and spirit of sacrifice of the Pakhtoons and said they had always been in the vanguard of the independence movement. "Pakhtoons are the symbol of bravery, sanity, democracy and independence. History bears testimony to this fact."

Also spoke on the occasion was NWFP Chief Minister Aftab Sherpao who said the government is giving top priority to the provision of irrigation and drinking water to the southern districts. He hoped Kurram Tangi Dam will bring about green revolution in the area.

The meeting was also addressed by federal Petroleum Minister Anwar Saifullah and PML(J) [Junejo] provincial chief organizer Salim Saifullah Khan. Many senators, MNAs [Member of National Assembly], MPAs [Member of Provincial Assembly], acting NWFP Governor Justice Syed Ibne Ali, Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani, Khalid Ahamd Kharal and Begum Nusrat Bhutto were also present.

A man armed with a pistol was arrested 30 feet near the prime minister. However, his intentions could not be known.

Rumors 'Baseless'; Government 'Stable'

BK0812012395 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has expressed her government's firm determination to provide all basic amenities to the people in every nook and corner of the country and these efforts could be accelerated if hurdles were not created through vicious propaganda campaign by the opposition. The prime minister was addressing a public meeting at Mastung, 45 km away from Quetta, while inaugurating the natural gas supply project to Mastung city and its adjoining areas. PTV Quetta representative Zafarullah Khan reports that the gas project has been completed at a cost of 120 million rupees on the directive of the prime minister, which also reflects the will and desire of the people's government for providing basic amenities to the people in a short span of time.

The prime minister said that whenever an initiative is taken by the government for the prosperity and progress of the people and strengthening of the economy, the vested interests try to thwart these efforts by spreading wrong and baseless rumors. The prime minister said that despite the vicious campaign launched against her by the opposition, her government was stable and would not be destabilized by such tactics of the vested interests. She said that she has undertaken extensive foreign visits and tours to invite foreign investment in Pakistan and in this connection she has achieved exemplary success. As foreign investment was flowing in, it would help set up industries, factories, and mills, bringing prosperity to Pakistan.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto declared she was not going anywhere but would remain with the common masses and continue to serve them. The prime minister said that the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] government is taking special interest in the development of Balochistan and her government has fulfilled another pledge by linking Mastung with the natural gas distribution system. She said that gas supplies would also be extended to Kuchlagh, Bostan, and Yaru. The prime minister said that the government is setting up a port at Gwadar in order to boost the international trade. She also announced that Gwadar and Panjgur would also be linked with the Pasni power project soon at a cost of 500 million rupees in order to provide electricity to the people of these areas. The prime minister said that work is also progressing on various national highway projects in Balochistan at a total cost of 5 billion rupees. The prime minister has announced a grant of 13 million rupees for sinking of tubewells and maintenance of roads in Mastung.

Speaking on the occasion, the federal minister for petroleum and natural resources said that the government is taking keen interest in providing natural gas to the people of the province. He said the natural gas is the product of the province, so it is the endeavor of the government to provide maximum gas facilities to the people. In his speech, the Balochistan PPP president, Mr. Sadiq Umrani, said that the steps taken by the PPP government would usher in an era of peace and prosperity in the country.

Addressing the Balochistan Bar Association in Quetta, the prime minister invited the opposition for a meaningful dialogue to strike the Eighth Amendment off the statute [empowering the president to dissolve the National Assembly]. If the opposition thinks that by undoing the Eighth Amendment, our government will gain strength, we offer to the opposition that let us strike off the Eighth Amendment at the time we announce for next general elections, the prime minister added. We make this offer in the larger interest of Pakistan and the people. She said Eighth Amendment was enacted in the Constitution by the assembly of 1985 under duress. She said the manifesto of Pakistan People's Party and those parties who are in the opposition today suggest that Eighth Amendment has to be undone because it does not serve the interest of people in Pakistan. So we make this offer to the opposition that let us work together to reform the Constitution. The prime minister also renewed her offer to the opposition for a dialogue for the restoration of women seats in the National Assembly. The prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, paid rich tributes to Balochistan Bar Association. Earlier, the president of Balochistan Bar Association, Mr. Shafi Sultan, presented the address of welcome.

Attempts To Discredit Democratic System Assailed

BK0712142995 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 7 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Members from all sides in the National Assembly today took strong exception to the statements by unrepresentative people against the parliamentary democratic system and said that the verdict of the people must be honored. Syed Iftekhar Hussain Gilani and Mr. Mahmud Khan Achakzai referred to the statements appearing in the press and wanted action under Clause 6 of the Constitution in this connection. Mr. Achakzai stressed for a thorough discussion on the issue and adoption of a unanimous resolution that anyone playing with the mandate of the people should be made accountable.

The minister of state for law and justice, Mian Raza Rabbani, said the assembly would complete its full term. He criticized statements of those who were casting doubts on the democratic system and said the people of Pakistan have repeatedly given their verdict in favor of a democratic parliamentary system and they would like that their mandate must be honored.

The speaker, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, in his observation said there is not threat to the assembly and the system if the house is united. He said that credence should not be given to the statements of outsiders who are casting aspersions. He, however, said by such statements they were committing contempt of the house.

The house today continued discussion on the president's address to the both houses of the parliament on the 29th of October last. Taking part in the discussion, Khwaja Mohammad Asif of PML-N [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz group] strongly criticized those who were indulging in the propaganda to discredit the parliamentary system and defame the politicians. He said the democratic system was not allowed to function smoothly and stressed the need for the establishment of the writ of the mandate of the people. [sentence as heard] The house will now meet again on Sunday [10 December] afternoon at 1600.

MQM: Government To 'Massacre' Civilians 16 Dec

BK0812021595 (Internet) MQM NEWS in English
1 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Rabitah Committee have expressed its fear on some news reports about the importance of the month of December particularly December 16.

Recently the ruthless and inhuman General Nasirullah Babar gave a statement that this month of December is very important and some important events are going to take place in Urban Sindh. Rabitah Committee said that it is feared that on the pretext of containing terrorism, Government troops under the command of General Babar, will massacre innocent citizens. Rabitah Committee asked all Muhajirs to be cautious.

Sri Lanka

Offensive Planned To Secure Area Around Jaffna

BK0812064695 Hong Kong AFP in English
0642 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Dec 8 (AFP) — President Chandrika Kumaratunga on Friday [8 December] announced the Sri Lankan army would launch another military offensive to secure a vital land route to the former Tamil rebel bastion of Jaffna.

Kumaratunga told reporters here that road access to the northern Jaffna peninsula was necessary to undertake a massive rehabilitation program following the military's capture of Jaffna earlier this week.

"We will open a land route to Jaffna the same way we took Jaffna", Kumaratunga said, referring to the army's offensive to wrest control of the region from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

State of Emergency in Northeast Extended

BK0812112095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 8 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The motion to extend the state of emergency by one month in the northern and eastern provinces and several other divisional secretariat areas has been passed in Parliament by a majority of 101 votes. Winding up the debate, Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte pledged to restore peace to the country very soon. The government will implement a three-phased program to achieve this end. Victory over terrorism is the first phase. The second involves finding a political solution to the ethnic problem — a process which is already under way. Development of areas liberated by the security forces — the third stage of the program — will begin within the next two weeks. The minister pointed out, however, that finding a solution to such a long-standing problem was a difficult and complicated process.

Indian Agency Claims LTTE 'Militant Bases'

BK0812023095 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
8 Dec 95

[Report by Upali Rupasinghe — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE Inter-State Intelligence Agency based in Calcutta and working in the eastern region, in a report sent to the Union Home Ministry in Delhi yesterday declared three districts and two town areas as "LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] connected militant bases."

Cooch-Bihar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts in West Bengal and two tiny towns Morey in Manipur and Gidda in Assam have been named as bases with "definite threat to the country's security." Officers of all intelligence agencies based here agreed with the anticipated large scale infiltration of LTTE militants in to the region, the report said.

The report states: "India has always supported the Sri Lankan Government on offences against the extremist organisation. Now that Jaffna has fallen and mopping up operations by the Sri Lankan Army are on, the Tigers would have to find escape routes and seek shelter in neighbouring countries."

"Several States in the eastern region have a sizeable Tamil population and the ethnic bond was the uniting factor. LTTE cadres would find sympathisers in these areas. National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) and the Boro Security Force operating in the north-east would sympathise with the LTTE because these militant outfits would have one goal trying to destabilise the country," the report states.

The Union Home Ministry officials who are studying the report with intelligence experts will call a meeting of the State heads to draw up a plan to combat the threat by militants. Intelligence bosses are also planning to visit the three northern districts in the next few days to discuss counter ways to meet the threat of LTTE infiltration with the police highups in the respective areas.

LTTE 'Press Release' on 'Liberation Struggle'

BK0712062595 (Internet) soc.culture.tamil in English 5 Dec 95

["Press Release" issued by LTTE Political Committee at its headquarters on 5 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Military Preparations in Poonakari - Elephant Pass, With the Aim of Enslaving the Tamil People

The political aims of the government were badly defeated in Valigamam when the people vacated their homes and left for Thenmaratchi and Vadamaratchi. The army stationed in Poonakari and Elephant Pass are making active preparations to bring the people of these two areas under their hold. By this they hope to achieve their original aim of enslaving the Tamil people. This is the gist of a report issued by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] political committee. To defeat the scheme of the government the LTTE advises the displaced persons to move to the Vanni mainland. By doing this the Tamils are gaining their liberty as well as a prosperous future, concludes the report.

Health, Education and Transport Facilities Move to the Vanni Mainland

The majority of the displaced persons of the Valigamam areas have shifted to the Vanni mainland. Due to this factor, arrangements for their general welfare including health, education and transport have to be made. Therefore such facilities that existed before in Valigamam are now being steadily transferred to the mainland.

45 New Recruits in One Day

45 members of the transport supervisory group have joined the ranks of the LTTE in one day. No one can resist the appeal of our National leader made on the Heroes Day says one recruit. We have a duty towards the Tamil Nation in joining the LTTE and taking up arms says another. In recent times Vanni takes the lead in the number of recruits swelling the ranks of the LTTE fighters.

53 Die in One Month

Manthikai hospital overcrowded with patients. Overcrowding is a major problem in the Manthikai hospital in Vadamaratchi area. No ward is free or vacant. Patients are sleeping under the beds on mats. Hospital welfare societies and the FORUT organisation have donated 125 mats to the hospital. However there is always a shortage of mats in the hospital. Patients are advised often to bring their own mats.

During the month of November 53 persons including babies have died in this hospital. The main killer is diarrhea. Fever in its various from is taking a heavy toll. An employee of the hospital stated that 4 patients had died in one day last month.

Shelling of Vadamaratchi Continues

For the second month is succession the Palaly army camp continues to pour artillery shells on the villages of coastal Vadamaratchi in the Jaffna peninsula. Yesterday morning two artillery shells fell in a garden situated in between Polikandy and Thikkam. It is fortunate that nobody was hurt.

Procession of Heads of Schools Teachers and High Level Students in Pt. Pedro

A procession in support of the Liberation struggle started in the 1st mile junction and ended in the harbour premises in Point Pedro in Jaffna peninsula. The heads of schools teachers and high level students of the various schools were in this procession. Placards stating that this war is thrust on us and our only alternative is to join hands with the LTTE and fight for Liberation were carried by the participants. The people should be alive to their National duty declared an elderly head of a leading school. A public meeting was held at the end of the procession followed by a musical event.

[Signed] Political Committee, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(English translation of the LTTE statement released by LTTE international secretariat, 211 Katherine Road, London E6 1BU, United Kingdom, Tel/Fax: 0181-470 8593.)

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